

No 307

AUG. 18TH 1911

5 Cents.

FAME AND FORTUNE WEEKLY.

STORIES OF BOYS WHO MAKE MONEY.

"MILLIONS IN IT" OR A BOY WITH IDEAS.

By A SELF MADE MAN.



With an angry roar the farmer tried to carry out his threat. Sam grabbed the axe by the handle, while Micky seized the hayseed around the waist from behind. The boys found the husky chap a mighty proposition.

Fame and Fortune Weekly

STORIES OF BOYS WHO MAKE MONEY

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Price 5 Cents.

“MILLIONS IN IT”

OR,

A BOY WITH IDEAS

By A SELF-MADE MAN

CHAPTER 1.

THE BARNSTORMERS.

“Is this Plainfield?” asked Sam Sharpley, a husky looking boy of eighteen, poking his head out of the door of one of the coaches of the 2:15 a. m. accommodation from Motley Junction, on the D. & G. railroad line, as the train began slowing up for its brief stop at a dreary looking station, lighted by a single smoky lamp.

The brakeman, to whom the remark was addressed, said it was.

“It’s Plainfield, Micky,” said Sam, turning half around and speaking to a small boy with a Hibernian cast of countenance. “Get a move on and hustle the ladies and gents out as soon as the train stops. And don’t overlook Downey Grab like you did last night. He’s got his usual load on, and is asleep in the corner seat. Yank him out if he won’t come of his own accord.”

“Is it the manager yez want me to lay me hands on? Sure it’s bounced. I’ll be whin he gets sober,” replied Mickey.

“Bounced! Don’t you worry, Micky. He isn’t such a fool as to bounce so useful a member of the company as yourself. Besides, he’ll never remember the incident. Go on, now; you haven’t more than half a minute to get every one on the move.”

Sam stepped out on the forward platform of the coach and got down on the last step ready to spring off when the train stopped.

Right ahead was the baggage car.

Already the side door was open, and through it pro-

truded the end of an oblong sinister-looking black box, a large yellow paper pasted on it bearing the printed words in heavy black type—“The Downey Grab Stock Co.”

The box contained the scenery, such as it was, of the theatrical organization which owned the aforesaid Grab as its manager.

On either side of it stood two grim-visaged baggagemen ready to fire it out on the station platform.

As Sam stepped off the car the black box shot out of the baggage-car door, like a huge stone from a catapult, and landed on the platform with a crash that awoke the echoes of the night.

Then followed a couple of good-sized trunks, one containing “props” and the other costumes and other instruments, handled with the same remorseless energy.

It was biff, bang, crash, with each, and then the two baggagemen leaned against either side of the opening of their car, and surveyed the jumbled baggage with a sardonic grin.

Sam, whose duties as property-man of the “show” made him responsible for the oblong box and the two trunks the moment they left the baggage car, was a witness of the rough handling they had received, but he knew better than to voice a protest.

It was not the first time that the company’s effects had been handled without gloves by the baggagemen of the trains patronized by Downey Grab’s aggregation of talent—in fact it was a regular occurrence and Sam was used to it.

In the meantime a dozen ghostly looking figures, three of whom were females, carrying heavy suitcases, stumbled down the steps of the car, like people only half awake.

The conductor, lantern in hand, watched their exit from the car with ill-concealed impatience.

Downey Grab, the manager, came last of all, leaning heavily on Micky Free, Sam's assistant.

The odor of rum hung about him, and he seemed incapable of looking out for himself.

That was nothing unusual with Grab.

Like all great men, he had his weakness, not that the manager was really considered a distinguished personage by any one but himself.

The moment Micky got him on the platform the conductor shouted "All aboard" from sheer force of habit, since there was nobody waiting to get on the train at that early hour in the morning.

Then he swung his lantern and hopped on the car as the engineer pulled out for the next station, some fifteen miles away.

There was no bus on hand to convey the tired professionals to the hotel, half a mile away, so they had to start off and tramp the distance on foot.

As they filed off into the darkness, two of the men forcing the manager along between them, Sam went up to the sleepy-looking station agent and asked him to help Micky and himself pull the oblong box and the two trunks into the station building, where they were to remain till called for later on.

Assisted by the half-dopy agent the boys hustled the company's property into the station, and then they hurried after the manager and the performers, after learning that the road on the other side of the station, if followed to the right, would bring them to Main Street, where they would find the hotel, a typical country place.

At that hour the hotel was dark and silent, like the stores in its immediate vicinity, and the houses roundabout.

The boys, hurrying forward, could hear the thumping of one of the actors on the front door.

"Begorra, we always have to wake thim landlords up," said Micky, with a yawn.

"Since we're never expected, how can it be otherwise?" replied Sam. "Mr. Grab does not consider it necessary to keep an advance agent ahead of the show, therefore our advent in these villages is unheralded. That throws all the work of billing the company on us."

"Sure it does, worse luck!"

"How can Mr. Grab expect to pull a house when the 'paper' is only put out a few hours ahead of the performance?"

"Faith, doesn't he depind on the band to do the business?"

"Yes, and a pretty band we've got. We make more noise than music. I'm getting tired of barnstorming in this fashion. There's nothing in it for anybody but Mr. Grab, and not a whole lot for him. With his reputation as a snap manager it is really a wonder to me how he manages to get a company to go out with him; and yet I understand he has never had any great difficulty in securing all the people he wants."

"Begorra, that's right," nodded Micky. "This is the third company he's taken out this season, so it is. The first got stranded durin' the second week, and the second wint up the spout the third wake. It's luck we've been havin' to stay out four wakes. I think that's due to you and

me. Sure we're the backbone of the show. But wait till we run ag'in a rale frost and you'll see Mr. Grab go up like a balloon. He's so full of wind that all he nades is a push to sind him sky-high!"

"I should say he has more whiskey than wind in him as a rule," chuckled Sam.

The tired actors had just succeeded in enticing the landlord from his bed when the two boys came up.

The boniface stood in the doorway, only half awake, clad in his shirt, trowsers and slippers.

Such a bunch of guests at any hour would have been gladly welcomed by him, but for reasons he felt rather shy toward the votaries of the drama.

He stated his terms, agreed to a rebate in favor of the profession, but wanted a deposit on account as an evidence of good faith.

It was not the business of the members of the company to advance the required deposit, and as Mr. Downey Grab was snoring peacefully in the grasp of his two supporters, matters looked blue until Sam came to the rescue.

"How much do you want, landlord?" he asked.

"Ten dollars will do," was the reply.

Sam walked up to the manager, shoved his hand into his right trowsers pocket and pulled out a small roll of bills, while the company looked on admiring his nerve.

The boy counted out the necessary amount, handed it to the landlord, and returned the rest to Grab's pocket.

The Thespians were then admitted and allotted to rooms, everybody doubling up except the odd lady and the manager, who got small rooms to themselves.

The landlord regarded Sam as the most important personage connected with the company, and gave him and Micky the best room in his house, which wasn't saying a whole lot.

He called it the bridal chamber.

"Bridle chamber, is it?" said Micky, as he and Sam pulled off their clothes. "Sure that's what I always called the stable in the ould dart."

The manager and his performers slept till eleven, when they appeared in the dining-room for breakfast.

Not so Sam and Micky, who regarded themselves as the backbone of the show.

The former had requested the landlord to have him and his companion awakened at seven, when they expected to be served with their breakfast.

Four hours' sleep is hardly enough to begin a hard morning's work on, but the boys had to make the most of it, and get the balance during the afternoon if they could.

The evening's box office receipts depended on their early exertions, and after finishing breakfast, they started out to corral a squad of kids to help them bill the village.

The only inducement Sam had to offer their allies was a free pass to the show, and this had never failed to get all the help they wanted.

As fast as they arranged with a boy they directed him to go to the Op'ry House, which Sam had ascertained was a small hall over the express office and post-office, not far from the hotel.

It was equipped with cheap chairs, fastened on planks; a yellow-keyed, consumptive-toned piano, of a brand in fashion about the time of the Civil War; a stage furnished with a footlight trough fitted with kerosene lamps; a faded pro-

scenium and drop curtain—the latter representing some foreign subject, originally painted in glowing sunset hues; half a dozen "drops," or scenes, suspended by clothesline ropes run on pulleys attached to the rafters twelve feet above, by which ingenious arrangement the rollers at the bottom of the scenes were induced to ascend and descend.

On either side, in groups of two, wooden grooves were nailed to the rafters, with corresponding wooden pieces secured to the stage.

These slanted just a bit toward the back, and held in place oblong wooden frames, in skeleton, covered with painted canvas, and represented the "wings" that went with the different "drops."

Two long pieces of canvas, stretched the full depth of the stage on either side, furnished dressing-room accommodation—one for the women and one for the men—and were impartially fitted each with an unpainted board shelf, a couple of cheap mirrors, and as many wooden pegs in the wall as places could be found for at suitable intervals.

Such was the opera house at Plainfield, and it was a very fair sample of similar Thespian temples to be found in the small towns throughout the West, in which region Downey Grab's repertory company was touring.

CHAPTER II.

SAM SHARPLEY ON THE JOB.

When Sam reached the opera house, entrance to which was to be had through a double door, at present locked, over which was a large lamp provided with red glass, lettered on both sides "Opera House," he found seven eager-looking youths assembled in a bunch canvassing the merits of the forthcoming show.

As yet they were densely ignorant of the play that was to be produced, but judged that it was in line with such productions as had already honored the village at irregular intervals.

"Are you all ready to get to work?" asked Sam.

"Yes, yes," chorussed the lads.

"What time does the express office open?"

"It ought to be open now," said one of the boys.

"The agent has our paper. You'll have to be patient till he gets here."

"Here he comes now," said a boy.

Up the street came the express agent, who was also a Western Union operator, and handled all the telegraphic business of the town.

In fact he expected a theatrical company to materialize that day, for he had received a C. O. D. bundle, the afternoon before, addressed "The Downey Grab Stock Co., Plainfield. From the Chicago Show Printing House. Collect \$4."

Sam was waiting to get that bundle.

He had taken the precaution to get a \$5 bill from Downey Grab before the previous night's performance at Motley Junction, in order to pay for the paper.

The manager gave it up with reluctance, but he realized that it was one of the absolutely necessary expenses he had to meet if the show was to go on.

During his long career as a theatrical manager he had

showed a brilliant reluctance to parting with money even when he was doing good business.

When he was able to pay salaries in full, in times past, the "ghost" had not walked with that degree of regularity that pleases members of the profession.

He adopted all manner of expedients to avoid separating himself from the long green, and now that fortune no longer treated him as he felt that he deserved, the habit became necessary.

Since the present company started out the people had been paid small sums on account, whenever they were so fortunate as to corner him.

As he usually managed to fool his actors, there was a considerable balance coming to them.

The only persons who had been paid almost in full were Sam and Micky.

They drew the least money from the treasury anyway, Sam having signed for ten dollars and Mickey six dollars per week.

The manager had his reasons for acting liberally, as he called it, to Sam.

Sam learned the chief reason when the time came.

Micky wouldn't have got any money at all only for Sam.

The only performer who had collected half of his four weeks' salary was Charley Unger, the comedian, and the rest of the company regarded him as a wonder.

The fact was Unger had the knack of locating the manager when he was figuring on a "touch," and Downey Grab never could shake him till he produced.

As Unger was invariably seen in consultation with Sam previous to his descent on the treasury, it might be supposed that the boy tipped him off to Grab's whereabouts.

If he did, Unger never said anything about it, for if the rest of the company had got an inkling of it they would have flocked about Sam like a swarm of irritated hornets.

Sam paid the four dollars, and the express charges on the bundle, and was about to take it outside when the express agent said:

"What kind of a show have you got, young man?"

"Finest on the circuit," replied the boy, with a grin.

"That's what they all say. Where is the manager?"

"At the hotel, asleep. We didn't reach this burgh till 2:10 this morning."

"You can tell him that I'm the owner of the opera house upstairs, and that he'll have to see me about getting it."

"I am authorized to represent him. I have a blank contract in my pocket which we can fill out and sign now just as well as not."

"All right," said the express agent.

"Say, you don't mind if I open this bundle here, do you? I want to send those boys outside around town with the small bills."

"Of course I don't mind. Use the counter all you want." Sam cut the cords and opened the bundle.

A bunch of quarter sheet hangers, in two colors, lay on top.

Sam skinned off one of them and handed it to the agent and manager of the opera house for his instruction.

The bill ran as follows:

OPERA HOUSE.

To-night!

To-night!

To-night!

THE DOWNEY GRAB STOCK CO.

will present

The Greatest of all Dramatic Successes,

The Thrilling 4-act Drama,

"LIGHTS OF A GREAT CITY."

Special Scenery.

Electrical Effects.

ALL-STAR COMPANY.

10—20—30 Cents.

Reserved Seats at—

While the express agent was reading the bill, with mental reservations as to special scenery and electrical effects, Sam yanked out of the bundle an armful of small throwaways reading exactly the same as the hanger.

He distributed these equally among the boys and chased them to work, telling them to report to him at the hotel about one o'clock, when he would hand out the passes, which would admit bearer to a ten-cent seat at the back of the hall.

The boys started off, each reading one of the bills to learn about the play, and Sam returned to the counter.

At that moment Micky joined him, and without a word picked up a bunch of the hangers and went off to display them in all the stores and other public places.

Sam pulled a small folding hammer and a paper of tacks from his pocket and tacked up a bill on the post-office side of the room.

"I'm ready to do business with you," said the agent.

"Very good," said Sam. "There isn't much to be done. You furnish the hall, lighting, orchestra, ushers, ticket seller, and we furnish the company, special scenery, electrical effects, printing, band and doorkeeper. We expect seventy per cent. of the gross."

"How much?" asked the agent.

"Seventy per cent."

"You don't want much, do you?"

"As we have a large company, a box of special scenery and a bang-up band, that's about right."

"How many people do you carry?"

"Thirteen, including myself and the manager."

"What are you—the business manager?"

"Yes, I'm the business manager, property man, I double on the stage and also in brass, and, as you see, I am also the advertising agent."

"You have your hands full, haven't you?"

"I am kept fairly busy. Well, shall I write in seventy per cent?"

"I think not. Make it sixty."

"We'll split the difference and call it sixty-five," said Sam, writing that in, without waiting for the opera house man to dissent. "Now sign here, Mr.——"

"My name is Fox," said the man, affixing his John Hancock to the contract.

"My name is Sam Sharpley," said the boy, dashing his signature off.

The contract was signed in duplicate, each party retaining one.

"You'll see the manager later," said Sam. "He will introduce himself."

"Downey Grab. I think I've heard of him, but I am

sure I never met him. He has been in the business some time I suppose?"

"Oh, yes," replied Sam. "He's one of the best known managers in the West. This is the first time he has taken in such small places as Plainfield on his route. He is losing money by doing so. But he feels that he owes a duty that can best be fulfilled by giving the inhabitants of the villages a chance of seeing the truly splendid drama 'The Lights of a Great City.' Under these circumstances I trust, for your own interest, as well as his, you will call the attention of all who drop in here to-day to the treat that is in store for them. Loan me your mucilage-bottle, please. I'd like to hang a bill in each of the windows."

Sam then tacked a bill on each side of the double door of the opera house, and a couple more on the two trees in front.

As everybody in the village knew that reserved seats for opera house shows were sold at Brown's drug store on the next corner, Sam didn't bother writing that fact on the bill.

He got a bunch of thirty-cent tickets and took them to the drugstore, where he introduced himself to Brown, hung up a couple of bills inside, and several more on the trees outside, after assuring the druggist that Downey Grab's Stock Co. and the drama of 'The Lights of a Great City' were the finest ever.

Sam then dropped in to see the editor of the village paper.

After introducing himself, he asked when the paper came out.

The editor and proprietor told him that the Clarion was published on Saturday morning.

"What a pity you don't come out to-day!" said Sam, with assumed regret. "In that case I could give you a large advertisement. I never neglect a chance to pull the people."

"You might give me a job of printing," suggested the proprietor, with an eye to business.

"Sorry, but we have all the paper we need. I have a dozen or more of the rising generation of this village out billing the place. I suppose three passes will be as many as you require."

The proprietor modestly suggested that his family was a large one, and that six would come nearer the mark.

"All right. I'll give you three now. You can ask Mr. Grab, when he calls, for the others. I suppose you will give me the privilege of hanging a bill in your window? Thank you. Good-day."

Sam slapped up two bills outside and went on his way.

CHAPTER III.

DOUBLING ON BRASS.

At noon, precisely, the male members of Downey Grab's Stock Co., arrayed in red caps decorated with gilt braid, and accompanied with some kind of wind instrument, took their way to the opera house.

It is the long established custom of repertoire companies playing one-night, and even longer stands, at the moderate prices of ten, twenty and thirty cents, for the masculine

members to make their bow to the tooting of their own horns.

Whether he be the leading man or the hustler of props, he is engaged with the understanding that he "doubles in brass," or, in other words, performs as a musician in the mid-day street parade, in addition to displaying his abilities on the stage in the evening.

It is therefore necessary for a person whose ambition circles around a cheap road company to learn to play passably well on some brass instrument.

He can learn to act afterward.

The way Sam Sharpley secured his engagement with Downey Grab was through the fact that he was a very fine performer on the cornet.

As soon as the manager heard him play he snapped him up at once at the princely stipend of ten dollars per—haps.

He got hold of a treasure with Sam, for the boy was fond of the show business, though, strange to say, he did not care to be an actor.

Sam was looking for experience so as to take out a show himself some day.

He came to the right shop for experience when he signed with Downey Grab.

The people who went with Grab expecting to get money were usually disappointed.

Thirty dollars a week was the limit he put on his leading man, and so on down to about ten dollars.

Those figures were written in the contract.

Attempts had been made to levy on the long black box containing the scenery, and the trunk labeled "props," both of which belonged to the manager, but at the critical moment they could not be found.

They and the property man, bribed by Grab, disappeared together.

The performers provided their own instruments and costumes.

They owned the former and usually hired the latter.

Micky Free was the only male member of the stock company who could not perform on a wind instrument.

Sooner than have his services go to waste Downey Grab purchased a second-hand pair of cymbals for him, and thus the Irish lad was enabled to double in brass.

Sam, on account of his musical ability, was made leader of the band.

He led off with the air and the others followed down to Old Howler, an ex-tragedian, who did old men's parts on the stage, who furnished the "Um-pah—um-pah" on the big bass instrument.

It was a great band, and when it got down to business you could hear it half a mile on a still day.

On the present occasion Sam began proceedings with a cornet solo, as usual.

As he was really an artist in his line, his playing always attracted a big crowd.

The crack cornet players of famous bands had very little on him when he did his best.

He invariably received a big round of applause.

Naturally the spectators, after hearing him, expected something unusual from the rest of the band, and were disappointed.

After Sam's playing had been applauded he gave the

order to march to the ching, ching, ching-ching-ching of the cymbals in Micky's energetic grasp.

With a bunch of village boys behind, the procession proceeded up Main Street.

In a moment or two the whole band burst forth with "There'll be a Hot Time in the Old Town To-night," or something equally characteristic.

That brought every one to their door.

And it told every one, who had not already learned the fact from the bills, that there was something on at the op'ry house that night.

While his people were trying to draw the public, Downey Grab was hobnobbing with the proprietor of the hotel across the bar.

What Mr. Grab didn't say about himself and his abilities as a theatrical manager is hardly worth mentioning.

Professional jealousy on the part of the managers of the great cities who stood out against him as one man, compelled him to tour the provinces.

But he assured the hotel man that the time would yet come when he would triumph over his enemies, and make them all look like very small potatoes indeed.

At one o'clock the company sat down to dinner in the hotel dining-room, and then Sam and Micky sneaked off to get the balance of their sleep.

Sam, from experience, knew better than to go to their room.

The manager was sure to arouse them both to attend to some business connected with the show.

So they glided off down Main Street and took their way to the suburbs, where a small river ran sparkling in the sunshine.

Here they found a quiet, shady spot among the trees that bordered the stream, and in ten minutes both were asleep.

While the over-worked property boy, business manager, and advertising agent combined, was sleeping the sleep of the weary, with his assistant, Micky, beside him, three members of Downey Grab's Stock Co. came that way.

The afternoon being theirs to dispose of at will, Charley Unger, the comedian, Henry Johnson, the heavy man, and Frank Robinson, who played juvenile lead, took a notion to explore the country around Plainfield.

"Listen!" exclaimed Johnson, in tragic tones. "I think I hear the sound of some one's nasal bugle. Dust hear it, brothers?"

"I dust," replied Unger. "It's some guy snoring."

"Ah! What a lovely sylvan glade in which to court slumber's sweet bondage," said Johnson.

"It's a good place to sleep if you haven't the price of a bed," said Robinson, in practical tones.

As the actors advanced nearer the sleepers they recognized them.

"It's Sharpley and the Harp," said Unger. "It's the latter who is whistling 'Erin Go Bragh' through his nose."

"I wonder what brought them out here?" said Robinson, as the Thespians paused in front of the boys.

"I should judge that their legs brought them, for I don't see any whiz-wagon around," said Unger, solemnly.

"I suppose you think that's funny, Unger?" said Robinson, with an air of disgust. "If you were half as funny on

the stage as you try to be off, the show would probably make more money."

"You're the Jinx of the show yourself, Robinson. You try to pose as a matinee idol because you're cast for the lovers part, but you're a yap at the business."

"Is that so? Whoever told you that you were a comedian?" said Robinson.

"I don't have to be told. True ability always comes to the surface."

"So does a dead fish."

"That's a good wheeze for you, Robinson. You are certainly wasting your talents in repertoire. You ought to be playing with Booth or Irving."

"Why, they're dead, you chump."

"I know it," replied Unger, with a wink at Johnson.

"That's where you got his goat," said the heavy man.

"Talking about goats, what'll we do with these kids?" said Unger.

"Sell them to the railroad company. They're always looking for sleepers," said Robinson, with a grin.

"Don't pay any attention to him, Johnson. He's sometimes taken that way. Now I'll tell you what we'll do with Sharpley. We'll lift him up gently and carry him aboard that abandoned canal-boat in the creek. When he wakes up he'll wonder how he got there. It'll be a good joke on him," said Unger.

The other two fell in with the idea.

Sam looked so fagged-out that they didn't believe a little handling would wake him up.

So between them they lifted him as gently as possible and carried him a short distance up the river to the creek where the cumbersome-looking canal-boat lay moored to a post driven into the bank.

A plank connected with the deck, and over this they got him on board.

Then they lowered him down into the hold.

As they started to leave, Sam rolled over on his side and they distinctly heard him mutter:

"It's just the thing, Micky. There's millions in it."

CHAPTER IV.

THE DISCOVERY THAT SAM MADE.

"He's having a pipe dream," chuckled Unger, as the actors left Sam alone in his glory.

Three hours passed away, and the sun was pretty well down in the sky when Sam awoke.

He rubbed his eyes and looked around him in astonishment.

"Holy smoke! where am I at?" he exclaimed, not a little amazed at the transformation which had taken place in his surroundings.

He went to sleep in a leafy covert out in the open air, within sight of the river, now he found himself in the hold of some kind of a boat.

He sat up and scratched his head in a perplexed way.

"Well, if this doesn't get my goat I'm a——"

Then he stopped and listened, for he heard voices behind him.

Looking around he saw nothing but a rude bulkhead.

The voices came from behind it.

Curious to learn who the speakers were, he felt along the bulkhead till he found a knothole.

Applying his eye to this, he saw two rough-looking men examining and commenting on the contents of a good-sized bag.

Sam almost gasped when he saw them take a complete silver service, piece by piece, out of the bag, and figure on the value of each.

They valued it at \$1,000 at a rough guess.

Then they took out a lady's jewel case, which they opened, and appraised its contents of gems at a couple of thousand dollars more.

Other articles of value followed until they summed up the total results at about \$5,000.

There seemed to be no doubt that the men had committed a big robbery in the neighborhood.

"We've made a bang-up haul, Bill," said one of the pair.

"You bet we have. We'll live like pigs in clover when we reach Chicago."

"It's about time we had a little luck. We must hide this bag somewhere till we're ready to light out after dark."

"There's a hollow tree on the bank. We can put it in there. No one is likely to come this way before to-morrow, and by that time we'll be half way to Chicago."

"A good idea. We'll do it. Then we'll go to the village and get supper at the restaurant."

"I'll go up first and take a look around," said the fellow named Bill.

He jumped out of the forward hatch and his companion awaited his return.

Bill came back in about ten minutes.

"The coast is clear," he said, poking his head down the hatch. "Hoist it up."

With Bill's help the bag and its contents were landed on deck, and the other man followed it.

Sam heard their tread on the deck.

Stepping on a box, which stood under the main hatch, he ventured to follow their movements.

They carried the bag to a huge gnarled oak tree, whose dead limbs pointed at the four quarters of the compass.

The men shoved the bag into an opening that Sam could not distinguish from his place of observation.

After pushing the shrubbery against it they started off in the direction of the village.

Sam waited awhile to give them a start, and then he got out of the hold and went ashore.

So interested was he in the bag of stolen silverware, jewels, and other articles of value, that the mystery of his presence on board the canal-boat was temporarily forgotten.

He went straight to the hollow tree, pulled the shrubbery aside and came upon the bag.

"They're coming back for it after supper, and expect to take it to Chicago and realize on the stuff. I guess it's my duty to remove it from their clutches, and later on turn it over to the police of this village. Now where shall I hide it so they won't discover it?"

He thought of dragging it into the bushes somewhere, but he was afraid the two rascals would make such a thorough search of the vicinity that they would find it.

The canal-boat did not appear to be a safe place for it, either.

Sam walked around, and at length came to a hole in the ground at a point near the head of the creek.

It was partly hidden by a bunch of bushes.

It seemed to be as good a place for hiding the bag as he was likely to find.

Returning to the tree, he found the bag much heavier than he had supposed it was, and it took all his strength to drag it from the hole.

The only way he could carry it was to get it on his back.

Succeeding, he staggered along to the hole and dropped it in.

He went some yards away and pulled up an armful of wild vegetation.

He threw this down on the bag, hiding it wholly from sight.

"That will do. I'll bet they won't find it there. Now I'll get back to the village, for it must be nearly supper-time," he said.

Although he did not know just where he was, for he and Micky had not come upon the creek during their walk, he had a general idea of the direction in which the village lay, and he started that way.

"It's a lucky thing for somebody that I happened to be on that canal-boat at the time those thieves were there, but what bothers me is how came I to be on the boat?" he mused, as he walked along. "The last thing I remember is lying down with Micky in that shady nook beside the river. Undoubtedly I went to sleep there. Unless I got up and walked to the canal-boat in my sleep I don't see how I could have got there. If I did that, it is something unusual for me. By George! That dream I had about the canal-boat may have been responsible for it. It was a great dream, too. I seemed to be carrying out the very idea I've had in my mind for some time. If I had the money necessary to start such an enterprise I believe it would be a great success. It is a kind of original scheme, and would do away with the chief difficulties a repertory show has to contend with. In my opinion there's millions in it, and one of these days I mean to give it a trial."

Sam stepped out into the road and saw Plainfield straight ahead, the windows of many of the houses reflecting the light of the setting sun.

Ten minutes later he was walking up Main Street toward the hotel.

There were a dozen chairs lined along the low veranda of that building, and these were mostly filled with the male members of Downey Grab's Stock Co., talking shop, while awaiting the supper bell, always a cheerful sound to them.

Even if the "ghost" didn't walk on Monday afternoons, as it ought to have done, they still had the consolation that the manager paid their board and lodging and traveling expenses.

That of itself was preferable to being "at liberty" in the city, with the ever-present spectre of an unpaid landlady threatening to turn them and their trunk into the street, as well as the necessity of bracing some prosperous-looking fellow-actor for the price of a cheap meal.

When Sam stepped on the veranda he was greeted by a broad grin.

Unger, Johnson and Robinson had circulated the joke they played on the boy, and all hands wondered what his sensations had been when he awoke and found himself on board the canal-boat instead of where he went to sleep.

The reader may think that the said practical joke didn't amount to a great deal, but anything that will afford even a trifling diversion goes with the members of a cheap repertory company on tour.

They are a happy lot, with nothing ahead but a life of small towns, poor railroads, cheap hotels and boarding-houses, and the corresponding discomforts, and nothing but a trail of the same thing.

The tour may start with a week or two of comparative prosperity, due to the fact that the show is just starting its season, and the manager still has a few dollars in his jeans to pay salaries and expenses, even if the necessary amount is not taken in at the door; but days of uncertainty are apt to follow.

From one small town to another the show drifts, sometimes barely making enough to pay its board bills, and then the end comes with a suddenness that would take away the breath of anybody but a died-in-the-wool repertory actor.

He's used to it, in fact expects it.

Sam saw the grin on the actors' faces and suspected that he was the cause of it.

"Hello, Sharpley, where have you been?" asked Unger.

"Out on the suburbs," replied the young property man.

"You and Micky went off together, didn't you?"

"We did."

"How came you to shake him?" chuckled the comedian.

"How do you know that I shook him?" asked Sam, suspiciously.

"Because he's looking for you."

"Yes, he got back a little while ago and said you and he went to sleep under the trees beside the river," said Robinson, "and when he woke up he found that you had gone away and left him. That's a nice way to treat your side partner."

"I wouldn't treat a chap that way—I'd take him up to a bar," said Unger.

"It isn't my fault. I walked off in my sleep."

A roar of laughter greeted Sam's reply.

"What are you fellows laughing at?" asked Sam.

"I didn't hear anybody laugh. Did you, Unger?" asked Robinson. The comedian shook his head.

"That must have been Old Howler you heard. He just went inside to brace the boss of the show for a quarter," said Unger. "So you walk in your sleep, Sharpley? Where did you go in your somnambulistic condition?"

"Oh, I just took a stroll," replied Sam, evasively.

"Where did you find yourself when you woke up?"

"In a place where I made a surprising discovery."

"Tell us about it."

"You'll learn about it later on. Which way did Micky go?"

The Irish boy answered for himself by appearing at the door.

"Oh, there yez are, Sam," he said. "And where did yez go to?"

Before Sam could reply the supper bell rang.

The actors rose like a flock of birds at the discharge of a gun and made a rush for the dining-room.

CHAPTER V.

DOWNEY GRAB'S STOCK COMPANY STRIKES A FROST.

As Sam and Micky had to go directly to the opera house after supper to set the first act of the play, which, owing to their desire for sleep they had neglected to do during the afternoon, the former had no time to hunt up the police and tell them about the bag of stolen property which he had concealed.

He intended to tell Fox, the proprietor of the opera house, who would be in the box office, and let him attend to the matter.

The walk to the hall was too short to enable him to tell all his story to Micky, but he began it by describing how, when he woke up, he found himself in the hold of a canal-boat in a creek, and it was a great mystery to him how he got there.

"It was some of thim actors pulled the trick on yez," said Micky.

"But how could they carry me to the boat without waking me up?" said Sam.

"You must have been dead tired like myself. Sure I wouldn't have heard a cannon if it had been fired off alongside me ear."

"I can guess who the funny ones were."

"Faith, a blind man could do that. It was Unger and Robinson. They're always up to just such didoes. They may have followed us, and when they found us aslape they worked the trick on yez."

By that time they reached the opera house, the door of which was open.

A small boy, the proprietor's son, was sitting in a chair beside the box-office, which was merely an enclosed space just large enough for a man to squeeze inside of.

It was furnished with a pane of glass, with an opening through which one could introduce his hand, and a shelf inside, wide enough to hold a money-box on one side and a box of tickets on the other.

A long flight of stairs with no landing till you reached the top led to a pair of double doors that opened on the hall.

"Is the door open upstairs?" asked Sam.

"No," said the boy; "do you belong to the show?"

"I'm the property man, and we've come to set the stage," said Sam.

"Here's the key," said the youth.

Sam took it and marched upstairs, followed by Micky.

Although it was light outside in the street, the landing above was rather dark.

Sam unlocked the door and placed the key on the inside.

He brought out the chair used by the doorkeeper, usually the manager of the attraction, or his representative, stood on it and lit the kerosene lamp, turning it low, lest the proprietor of the house should have an attack of heart failure.

The hall was lighted in the daytime by four windows at the back that overlooked Main Street.

When in use at night the illumination was supplied by numerous kerosene lamps, fastened to the walls, at intervals, and supplied with reflectors.

Sam and Micky reached the stage through a door at the top of four steps.

The curtain was up and the oblong black box, flanked by the two trunks, lay lengthwise on the twelve-foot stage.

The first thing that Sam did was to open the costume trunk.

It was divided into two sections, one of which held the larger musical instruments, which had been returned to it after the parade, while the other was crammed with the costumes.

To one not acquainted with the shifts and make-shifts adopted by the members of a road company, it would be a matter of surprise to learn that the costumes for a full repertory of four dramas—consisting of a Wild West play, a city melodrama, a rural drama of the order of "Way Down East," and some old favorite like "Ten Nights in a Bar-room"—could be crammed into one compartment of a large trunk; but such was the fact.

The same costume, assisted by trivial additions or omissions, and a change of wig and face make-up, will sometimes fill the bill for the performer in all four pieces, if the parts are alike.

At any rate the members of Downey Grab's Stock Co. managed to dress their parts without having any superfluous costumes to draw up.

It didn't take Sam long to yank the suits for the night's show on the stage.

A city melodrama doesn't require much in the way of costume.

The comedian and the soubrette were about the only ones who wore anything outside of their street attire.

Further disguise was accomplished with wigs, beards, and a stick or two of grease paint, applied with professional skill to their faces.

Sam tossed a thin-flowered skirt, fancy bodice and foreign headdress to Micky.

He didn't have to tell his assistant what to do with them.

The Irish boy carried them into the ladies' dressing-room and hung them on a couple of pegs.

While he was doing that Sam conveyed the comedian's German coat pants, vest and flaxen wig into the gent's dressing-room.

A few other articles followed behind each of the canvas screens, and then Sam slammed down the cover of the trunk, and he and Micky pulled it behind the wings near first entrance, to answer for a seat.

Sam then attacked the "props" used in the melodrama, and Micky picked them up as fast as he threw them out, and carried them to a corner behind the scenes.

Trunk No. 2 was then hauled over to the gent's side and left.

Before tackling the box containing the "special scenery" Sam let down and examined the six stock "drops," or scenes, that formed the scenic resources of the opera house.

As he expected, one was a street cloth, and that would do for the first act of "Lights of a Great City."

It was hung near the front.

He and Micky removed it to the extreme back, against the brick wall, for the full stage was required.

Another drop was a parlor scene, and that would fill the requirements of the second act—the drawing-room of a Fifth Avenue mansion.

The third act represented a view of the East River, with the Brooklyn Bridge, by night, and other local additions.

Nothing that would answer was to be found in the house, as a matter of course, but Sam had the cloth in the box, and he and Micky got it out, and hung it rolled up in front of the street scene.

The fourth act was an attic interior, and could have been faked up with the kitchen drop, but Sam considered the bar-room cloth, used in "Ten Nights," would be more satisfactory, so he got it out.

Two or three set pieces, that folded up small by means of hinges, came out of the box, and then the black case was closed, lifted off the stage and laid lengthwise in front of the first row of seats in the auditorium.

Before this work had all been accomplished, Micky had to light the lamps on the stage, at the wings, and those attached to a board in the flies.

The country-looking youth, who comprised the force of ushers, appeared and began to light up the hall.

Down at the entrance the bunch of boys holding free tickets began to assemble, prepared to make a rush and occupy the best ten-cent seats as soon as the door was open to them.

The members of the company also began to arrive with small bundles in their hands, containing their make-up sticks and other necessary articles which they carried in their private suitcases.

The manager followed a little later, and he stood at the outer portal like a great mogul till it was time for him to get "on the door" upstairs.

As soon as the stage was ready for the first act, Sam lowered the curtain, leaving the usher to light the foot-lamps.

Sam had been so busy that he had had no time to think about telling the proprietor of the opera house, had he been present, which he wasn't, about the stolen property down at the creek.

It was too late now for him to do it, for he had to make up as a tough for his appearance in the first act.

Micky appeared in the same act, and in the third and fourth as well, as a New York bootblack.

In the second act Sam enacted the thinking part of a footman and a servant to the owner of the Fifth Avenue mansion.

He also appeared in a minor role in the other two acts.

In addition to appearing on the stage Sam and Micky had to arrange the scenery for each act in turn, distribute the properties when required, fire a pistol behind the scenes, shout and growl as part of a fierce mob in the distance, and do a lot of other things, besides wait on the performers when wanted.

As if that wasn't quite enough to earn his ten-dollar salary, Sam was expected to wash up and go outside between the second and third acts and play a cornet solo, with piano accompaniment.

To tell the honest truth, that was the best feature of the show, because it possessed real merit.

Half-past seven came, Downey Grab took his place at the door of the hall and prepared for the rush of business he calculated that the thrilling melodrama, "Lights of a Great City," ought to draw.

Such a rush was really vitally necessary to recuperate his waning finances.

Business had been simply "rotten" for the last ten days, and unless he got a "house" that evening he would have to call the tour off, and leave the members of his company to shift for themselves, which, seeing that he hadn't paid more than quarter salaries, with the exceptions already mentioned, would leave the bunch stranded in Plainfield—a very serious matter to every one but Downey Grab himself.

Mr. Grab had met such a crisis more than once before, and the only effect it had upon him was a sense of disappointment that he had failed to "pull the money."

There were lots of actors always looking for work, and when he found another obliging "angel" willing to back him, he knew that he would have no trouble in forming a fresh company.

The only anxiety he had was to get the long black box containing the scenery, and the trunk full of "props," out of town without his people getting wise to the fact that the show was stranded.

With that object in ultimate view, he was always good to his property man, and, property men being human, considered it wise to stand in with the manager.

As we have remarked, Downey Grab was prepared for a rush.

It came in the shape of the seven small boys who had earned passes by helping to bill the village that morning.

Then there was a lull.

Ten minutes passed before the stairs resounded to the tread of anybody else, and then a man who had paid real money at the box office for a twenty-cent seat came up.

A dozen people with free tickets followed him at intervals, and then came the second paid-for ticket—a thirty-cent one this time.

Following them came a rush of two who had purchased reserved seats at Brown's drug-store.

The house looked awfully thin, but the seven small boys who were stamping for the orchestra to appear didn't worry about that.

The less people in the hall the better they could see the stage.

Professor Smith, who gave lessons on the piano to the rising generation of Plainfield's upper circle, was the orchestra, and he took his place at the antediluvian instrument in the hall at five minutes after eight.

As he had taken care to collect his pay in advance, the meagre size of the audience had no effect on him.

He opened the piano and began the overture with the same energy as though the opera house were crowded to its capacity.

The moment for ringing up was at hand, but there was no enthusiasm on the stage.

One and all had in turn piped off the "house" through the peep-hole, and all agreed with Charley Unger's doleful remark, that they had run up against an awful "frost."

CHAPTER VI.

SAM TAKES ACTION TO BLOCK DOWNEY GRAB.

Mr. Downey Grab saw the finish of his show when the curtain rose on the first act of his piece "The Lights of a Great City."

When that wouldn't pull a house it was "good night."

He counted \$1.60 in the auditorium, and his contract entitled him to sixty-five per cent. of that, or \$1.04.

Some people wouldn't have had the nerve to ask for it, but Mr. Grab wasn't built that way.

"I suppose you'd like a return date," said proprietor Fox, sarcastically, when the manager looked in at the box-office at half-past eight.

The witticism was lost on Mr. Grab.

He suggested a settlement and pocketed the \$1.04.

Then he went to the hotel to get his suitcase.

He needed it, he told the hotel man, to put the night's receipts in.

The confiding boniface had no suspicion that he wanted to get it out of the house, because he had announced that the company would remain at his house all night and take the 8:10 accommodation in the morning.

Downey Grab had learned that a train for Motley Junction stopped at Plainfield at 12:15 a. m.

He made up his mind to take it.

He knew that Sam had arranged with an expressman to take the scenery and props to the station immediately after the show, so they would be in readiness for the 8:10 a. m. accommodation.

He meant to have them put on the 12:15 train instead.

In the meantime he deposited his suitcase in the empty box-office and went upstairs to see how "The Lights of a Great City" was progressing.

He found there had been some additions to the audience since he left, but he could not tell whether they had paid or not, as proprietor Fox was not in sight.

There were worse companies on the road than Downey Grab's—much worse—and it was the fact that the village had been buncoed the week previous by an aggregation of talent that would have been sweeter on cold storage that kept the inhabitants away from the opera house that night.

"Mr. Grab will have to go down into his jeans for the hotel bill," said Sam to Micky after the curtain had fallen on Act Two, and the boys were setting the stage for Act Three.

"Begorra, that's what he will," replied the Irish lad. "That is, if he intends to go on with the show."

"Go on with the show!" exclaimed Sam. "Why wouldn't he go on with it?"

"Well, yez know we haven't been pullin' much money for the last tin nights, and after sich a frost as we've got to-night, he might fale that a frish start was better than kapin' on wid the prisint show. I know the ould cormorant, and nothin' he might do would surprise me, begorra."

"But it would cost him something to take the company back to Chicago."

"And do yez imagine he would do that?"

"What else if he closed the tour here?"

"Sure it's easy to see that yez are grane to the business yet."

"What do you mean, Micky?" asked Sam, pausing in the act of lowering the Brooklyn Bridge drop.

"I mane—but let me whisper it in your ear. If Mister Downey Grab intinds to quit now he'll take no one out of the place wid him unless it's yersilf and me."

"No one but us?" exclaimed Sam, in surprise.

"Whist! Not so loud, or it's a riot yez'll have on the stage. The only raison he'll take us is bekase he couldn't get the scenery and props off widout our hilp."

"And what about the company?"

"Sure they'll be stranded and will have to take pot luck."

"Do you mean to say he'll desert them?"

"What does he care for thim? The woods are full of actors."

"But he owes most of them a large part of their salaries."

"Faith, that doesn't worry him at all."

"It would be an outrage to leave them without doing the best he could by them."

"Whin you've been on the road awhile longer you'll learn that the manager only does the best for Number One, and that's himsilf."

"That kind of a manager is a swindler," cried Sam, indignantly.

"That's what he is, but what are yez goin' to do about it?"

"Do you really believe that Mr. Grab would do such a thing as that?"

"As he's done it siveral times before he's likely to do it ag'in. Did yez iver know a leopard to change his spots?"

"Well, he won't play that game on this company if I can stop him," said Sam in a decided tone.

"How will yez stop him? We've got to take the baggage to the station after the show to have it there in readiness for the 8:10 train in the mornin'. A train bound for the Junction, where we played last night, will stop at a quarter past twelve. If Mr. Grab is goin' to skip we'll find him at the station waitin' for that train. He'll tell us that the show is busted, and that we're goin' back to Chicago. If yez ask about the company he'll tell yez he's given thim tickets to come on in the mornin'. How are yez goin' to dispute his word? He may take us back to Chicago or he may drop us at the Junction—just as it suits him. All he's lookin' out for is to get the scenery and props back wid him, so he'll have thim ready for the nixt company he takes out."

"How can he take out a new company if he can't go on with this one?"

"He'll advertise for a backer, separate him from two or three hundred dollars, and that'll be enough to get him out ag'in."

"Does he divide with the backer if the show makes money?"

"Faith I couldn't say, for I niver heard that Downey Grab iver made any money on the road. He'll kape his show out as long as he makes expinses, barrin' salaries. Some actors will worruk for nixt to nothin' if yez give thim a good game of blarney, and the profesh will take a long

chance on the strength of board, lodgin' and travelin' expinses."

"I don't believe that any of our people, outside of Unger, has much more than the price of a clean shave in their pockets. They expect Mr. Grab to cough up a few dollars all around in the morning."

"What, on the house we've had to-night," grinned Micky.

"They expected a good house."

"Their expictations haven't panned out."

"Which is tough. If Mr. Grab leaves them stranded here how will they get out of the village?"

"Ask me somethin' asy, begorra. Thim that can't ride must walk."

"Why, it's twenty miles alone to the Junction."

"If it was fifty they'd be up ag'in it just the same."

Sam was about to reply, but the stamping of the small boys at the back of the hall for the play to go on became so insistent that Johnson, who was stage manager, told the young property man to hoist the curtain.

As the close of the show the wagon hired to carry the box of scenes and the two trunks to the station was in readiness outside to receive them.

In a very short time Sam and Micky had taken down and rolled up the two cloths used in the drama, and folded up the set pieces.

The curtain was hoisted on an empty and darkened auditorium, and the scenes and set pieces replaced in the box.

By that time the costumes, wigs, beards, and other articles were ready for packing.

Sam turned the job over to his assistant and stopped Unger as he was leaving the hall.

"Look here, Charley, there is a suspicion in my mind that Mr. Grab intends to take the 12:15 accommodation for 'Motley Junction,' he said. "You know what that means. Before I have the baggage taken to the station I wish you'd find out whether the manager is at the hotel or not. If you can't find him it will be a sure bet he's gone to the station and intends to skip. In that case we must find out where the justice lives, go to his house and get him to issue an attachment against the scenery and props. That will block Grab's game to carry them away with him. Then maybe we can manage some way to go on with the show ourselves."

"You're a good fellow, Sharpley, to give me the tip even if it amounts to nothing. In any case forewarned is forearmed. If Grab skips, possession of the scenery and props will give us a chance to proceed on the commonwealth plan. Maybe we'll be able to keep out, even if we only make expenses."

"Well, hurry now, for there's no time to lose. The expressman is waiting," said Sam.

Unger rushed off to the hotel, only a few doors away.

He soon found out that the manager was not about, nor was he in his room.

He also learned from the proprietor that Downey Grab had taken his suitcase to the opera house to put the night's receipts in.

"Did he say that was what he wanted to use it for?" asked the comedian.

"Yes," replied the boniface.

That settled the case in Unger's mind.

He hurried back to the hall.

"The old guy intends to shake us," he said to Sam. "Hold the baggage and send the expressman away till morning. I'll go out and swear out an attachment. The justice lives about four blocks from here."

"Wait, and I'll go with you. I've got a very important matter to see the justice about myself," said Sam.

The expressman was dismissed and then Sam and Unger started for the home of the justice, after seeing the hall locked up by the usher.

After some trouble they located the house and pounded on the door till a window was raised, a man's head thrust out, and an impatient voice demanded to know what was wanted at that unseemly hour.

Before Unger could explain Sam shouted:

"We want to see you about a big robbery that was committed in the village this afternoon."

"A big robbery!" cried the magistrate, in astonishment. "Whose house was robbed?"

"Come down and I'll explain."

The justice shut the window and hastened to dress himself.

"Say, Sharpley, what kind of a game did you give the justice?" asked Unger. "Is that the way you thought you'd get him downstairs?"

"It's no game at all. A robbery was committed."

"How do you know?" asked the surprised comedian. "I haven't heard a word about it. If such a thing had been pulled off here the village would have been in a ferment over it, and we'd have heard about it."

"I don't know anything about that. All I know is that when I woke up around five, on board that canal-boat where you and Robinson carried me——"

"How do you know that Robinson and me carried you there?" grinned Unger.

"It was an easy guess, for it was like you two to play such a prank. As I was saying, when I woke up I heard voices and saw two rough chaps inspecting a bag full of plunder which could only have come from some well-to-do person in this neighborhood."

"The dickens you say!" ejaculated the comedian, quite astonished.

"I heard them say they had made a fine haul, and intended taking the stuff to Chicago."

"Well?" said Unger, curiously.

"I watched them, and saw them hide the bag in a hollow tree, then they went into the village to get their supper. As soon as they were gone I removed the bag from the tree and hid it somewhere else, where I judge it still is. That is the story I have to tell the justice."

At that moment the door opened and the justice stood in the doorway.

CHAPTER VII.

DOWNEY GRAB TAKES HIS DEPARTURE.

The justice saw that the boys were strangers, and he regarded them with some suspicion.

"May I ask who you are?" he asked.

"My name is Samuel Sharpley, and my companion's is Charles Unger. We are members of the dramatic company which performed at the opera house this evening," said Sam.

The theatrical profession did not seem to appeal favorably to the justice.

"Am I to understand that the robbery to which you referred was committed on a member of your company?" he asked in a frigid tone.

"No, sir; some residence in this neighborhood has been looted of valuables worth fully \$5,000."

"Five thousand dollars!" ejaculated the magistrate, clearly astonished.

"Yes, sir."

"How came you to hear of this robbery? I have heard nothing about it, and I would naturally be one of the first to learn about such a thing. When did this robbery happen?"

"I couldn't tell you, but judge some time before five this afternoon."

"Before five, and it is now nearly midnight. Excuse me, young man, if I say that it seems ridiculous that a robbery could have happened in this village this afternoon and yet not have been reported up to this hour," said the justice, in a tone of disbelief.

"I admit that, particularly as it is a heavy robbery. I should have thought that everybody would have heard of it by this time."

"When and how did you learn about this alleged robbery?"

"I found it out about five o'clock, but the particulars can't be told in a minute."

"Why have you delayed in reporting the facts to the constable?"

"Because my duties as property man of the company prevented me from doing so until after the show. Before I tell you my story, Mr. Unger, here, wishes you to get an attachment against a case of scenery and a trunk of properties belonging to the show. The manager owes all of us from two to three weeks salary, and as we have evidence that he intends to leave us stranded here to-night, because business has been unsatisfactory, we propose to protect ourselves as far as we can," said Sam.

"Come around to my office in the morning and I will hear the case."

"The manager is going to take the 12:15 train, and though I have had the box and trunk we wish to levy on locked up in the hall, Mr. Grab might succeed in getting possession of them before we could bring the case before you in the morning. I think that in justice to the people who are entitled to recover even a small part of what is due them, that you should try and protect them."

"Well, I will issue an order on the proprietor of the opera house forbidding him to let the articles in question out of his possession until the matter has been decided at my office in the morning. Walk in, please."

The justice let Sam and the comedian into his library and pointed to seats.

He drew a printed blank out of a pigeon-hole in his desk and filled it out in accordance with Sam's answers to his question.

Handing them a testament, he said:

"You both swear that the facts herein set forth are the truth?"

Sam and Unger answered "yes."

"You serve that paper on Mr. Fox," said the justice, after signing it.

He handed it to Sam.

"You take this, Charley, hunt up the proprietor of the hall and give it to him," said Sam. "I've got to tell the justice about the robbery."

The magistrate gave Unger directions about finding Fox's house, and then the comedian took his leave.

Sam, alone with the magistrate, told him the particulars about the stolen goods.

The justice, whose name was Steele, could not but put faith in his story.

The proof of the pudding, however, is in the eating, so he determined to investigate it at once.

He aroused his gardener, and had him put the horse to the light wagon, and taking Sam and the man with him, Steele drove to the head of the creek where the canal-boat was moored.

After pointing out the hollow tree where the burglars had left the bag, Sam led them to the hole where he had hidden it.

The bag was found there, and a brief examination of its contents assured the justice that a robbery had indeed been committed.

It was loaded on the wagon and conveyed to the magistrate's home.

After Sam had been directed to appear at Steele's office at nine in the morning, he started for the hotel, where he found Unger, Micky and a servant of the hotel waiting for him.

"Grab has turned up," said Unger.

"Then he didn't take the 12:15 for the Junction?" replied Sam.

"Begorra he didn't want to go widout the scenery and props," said Micky. "Whin you and Unger went to see the justice I walked to the station, and there was Mister Downey Grab, as large as life, wid his grip in his hand, waitin' for the wagin to show up wid the stuff. I watched him from the corner of the buildin', and as time passed I c'u'd see he was gettin' unasy. Finally the train came along and he made no attimpt to get aboard. After it pulled out, he handed his grip to the agent to lock up in the office and thin he started back for the village. I asked the agent if the manager had bought any tickets for the Junction, and he said he had purchased three, so he intinded to take yez and mesilf that far, at any rate."

"He went to his room, I suppose?" said Sam to Unger.

"Yes, after taking several drinks."

"What do you suppose he intends to do now?"

"He left a call for six o'clock for himself and you and Micky. He'll get you to hustle the baggage to the station before breakfast. Then he'll send you two back to the hotel to get your breakfast, and in the meanwhile he'll connect with the early accommodation, which I've found stops here at 7:40, for the Junction, and he'll take his property with him. That's his plan as sure as you live," said Unger.

"Did you serve that paper on Mr. Fox?" asked Sam.

"Yes."

"Then how will Mr. Grab be able to get his property to the station in the morning in time for the 7:40?"

"I forgot about that. He won't be able to."

Sam told the hotel servant, who was waiting for them to go to their rooms, to rub out the call for himself and Micky.

When this was done all hands went upstairs.

Sam and Micky were awakened by a great pounding on their door at fifteen minutes after six.

"What's that?" growled the Irish lad, sleepily.

Bang—bang—bang!

"Hello, there, what do you want?" demanded Sam, not quite awake.

"Get up," cried the voice of Manager Grab.

"Go chase yourself," replied Sam, lying down again.

"Get up. It's time to get the baggage to the station," said Grab.

"Thin•get it there yersilf, begorra," said Micky.

"Get up, do you hear?"

"I'd be dafe if I didn't hear," mumbled Micky to himself, paying no further attention to the manager, who after banging some more went away.

Mr. Grab, seeing that he couldn't arouse his property man and Micky, determined to get the baggage to the station himself, but to do this he knew he would have to secure the co-operation of the proprietor of the opera house.

He found out where Mr. Fox lived from the hostler of the hotel, and hastened to his house.

The express agent, who was an early riser, was in his yard doing something.

Having been told by Unger that the manager intended to take the 12:15 train the night before, he was somewhat surprised to see him that morning.

As Downey Grab had no time to lose, he came to the point at once—he wanted Fox to open the opera house so he could get the long black box and the property trunk as soon as the expressman arrived.

"Sorry," replied Fox; "but you can't have them."

"Can't have my property!" exclaimed the manager.

"No. An order, signed by the justice, has been served on me which directs me to hold the box and trunk until further notice."

Downey Grab was paralyzed.

He jumped to the conclusion that the proprietor of the hotel had attached his property to make sure of being paid.

This was a heavy blow to the manager, for he had not figured on paying the hotel man.

He saw he couldn't get his property, so, turning on his heel, he walked away.

On his way back to Main Street, he balanced what he guessed he owed the hotel against the value of his scenery and props, and though the difference was in favor of the latter, it was not large enough to induce the foxy manager to pay out a bunch of good money, of which his supply was rather limited.

So he reluctantly decided to abandon the scenery and props, as well as his company.

He went into a restaurant, had some breakfast, and then walked to the station.

He persuaded the agent to take back the three tickets to Motley Junction and, with some addition of cash, give him a through ticket to Chicago.

Then he boarded the 7:40 train and shook the dust of Plainfield from his feet.

CHAPTER VIII.

SAM GETS A REWARD.

Sam and Micky slept on till half-past seven, and joined the company in the dining-room for breakfast.

Unger had said nothing as yet to his brother actors about the manager's purpose of leaving them stranded in the village.

He wasn't sure yet what course of action Downey Grab would take when he found that his plans to get his property had failed.

The manager, of course, was not present, as he was then at the station waiting for the 7:40 accommodation.

The company, outside of Unger and the boys, expected to take the 8:10 accommodation for Darien, the next town on their route.

They had all brought their suitcases from their rooms, and as soon as they finished breakfast they walked outside to take the 'bus for the station.

Then Unger called them all to one end of the veranda and broke the news to them.

While he was doing this the proprietor was looking for Downey Grab to get his bill settled.

Of course he couldn't find him, for Mr. Grab was by that time on his way to Chicago, so he tackled Sam, as the most important person next to the manager in his opinion.

He produced his bill and handed it to the young property man.

Sam looked it over, noted the amount due, and handed it back.

"I'm not the treasurer," he said.

"But I don't see the manager anywhere," said the boniface.

"I haven't seen him since last evening, when he was on the door at the opera house," returned Sam. "I suspect he has taken his departure this morning and left the company stranded here."

The hotel man had a fit at the possibility of losing his money.

He declared that the Downey Grab Stock Co., from the manager down, was a bunch of skins.

"Hold on," objected Sam. "We're not to blame. There is hardly a person connected with the show that isn't out more in salary than you are for accommodation."

He explained to the hotel man that Mr. Grab owed most of his people three full weeks salary, and that there wasn't money enough in the crowd to take them a third of the way back to Chicago.

"Well, you can't remain in my hotel," said the boniface, doggedly. "If you had trunks I'd hold them. I might have known you were no good when I found out that you all had only suitcases."

He walked away in very bad humor, and Sam joined his friends.

They were a very sick bunch indeed.

They couldn't find words strong enough in the English

language to express the sentiments they felt toward the recreant manager.

The three actresses were as outspoken as the rest.

If they could have laid their hands on Downey Grab at that moment they would have made him bald.

"What's to be done?" asked Johnson, in deep bass tones.

"Continue the tour on our own hook," said Unger.

"On what? Grab has doubtless carried off the scenery and props."

"No he hasn't. Sharpley put me wise last night to the manager's purpose and so I've attached the stuff."

"You did!" cried the company, in chorus.

"I did, at Sharpley's suggestion. I tell you, my professional friends, that boy has stood by us like a little major, and he is entitled to our thanks."

Sam was immediately voted a brick.

"It's going on to nine, Unger," said Sam. "We must move on to the office of the justice. —Come along, Micky."

The whole company decided to accompany them.

As they were afraid to leave their suitcases at the hotel they carried them along, and as a result they attracted considerable attention as they passed down Main Street.

They would have attracted notice anyway because of their profession.

All hands filed into the office of the magistrate and took possession of the seats, followed by as many villagers as could crowd in.

In a short time Justice Steele appeared.

He took up the attachment case, heard the testimony of the witnesses—about half the company—after Sam and Unger had stated the facts, and decided that the company, as a whole, was entitled to levy on any property belonging to Downey Grab that was in sight.

Sam told the justice how much in the aggregate Grab owed his people, and then, prompted by Unger, estimated the value of the scenery and props.

It fell considerably below their claims, so the magistrate signed an order turning the black box and the trunk of props over to the plaintiffs.

The proprietor of the hotel got wind of the proceedings, and rushed into the office with his claim, and a plea for attachment, too; but he was too late.

The professionals, individually or collectively, owed him nothing, and as they had captured all the visible assets of the show there was nothing for him to levy on.

He retired more disgruntled than ever, swearing that the next troupe of actors that wanted to stop at his place would have to pay in advance or hunt for accommodations elsewhere.

At that moment an excited man rushed into the office and told the justice that the residence of Lawyer Benton, the richest man in the village, had been robbed while the family was away the previous day at Darien.

"Tell Mr. Benton to call here and see me. You may also tell him that his stolen property has been recovered and is at my house. The thieves, however, have not been arrested so far, though the constables are out looking for them," said Justice Steele. "Young man," added the magistrate, turning to Sam, "I advise you to wait here till Mr. Benton arrives. Doubtless he will wish to reward you for the part you have played in the matter."

The members of the stranded stock company, Unger and the boys excepted, looked their surprise.

Being ignorant of Sam's connection with the stolen property, they could not understand what he had done to entitle him to any reward.

Unger beckoned them out into the street and put them wise to the matter, then he suggested that they return to the hotel and stay there for dinner at any rate, proposing that all hands chip in to the extent of their resources, and that he would make up whatever difference there was in the landlord's charge.

This suited the company, for they didn't know what else to do, so back they went to the hotel, and Unger tackled the landlord, made terms with him, collected the amount and paid it over in advance, as was necessary under the circumstances.

Sam and Micky remained at the office of the justice.

In the course of half an hour an automobile stopped at the door and lawyer Benton walked in.

After saluting the justice, he said:

"My man reported to me that the silver service, jewelry and other articles stolen from my house has been recovered."

"That is a fact, Mr. Benton, and I congratulate you on your good fortune in getting them back. This young man, whose name is Sharpley, is entitled to your thanks in the matter. According to his story, the thieves would have carried your property to Chicago but for him. He will explain everything to you," said the magistrate.

"I'll be glad to hear your story, young man," said the lawyer.

Sam told it in a few words.

"Upon my word, that was a clever ruse of yours," said Lawyer Benton to Sam. "I feel under the greatest obligation to you. The property stolen was worth a great deal more than \$5,000. You shall not find me ungrateful. I wouldn't have lost that silver service for twice its value, for it was made in France over 100 years ago for my grandfather, and has been in the family ever since. You say you have my property at your house, Mr. Steele?"

"Yes, sir. We will go there and I'll hand it over to you," said the justice.

"Thank you. Now, young man, you seem to be a stranger in this village," said the lawyer, looking at Sam.

"I am. I came here with the theatrical company which showed in the opera house last night. I am likely to remain here several hours at least, with the company, as the manager, owing to bad business, has left us all in the lurch—in other words stranded, with barely enough funds to pay our way."

"Indeed. That is a bad business for you all."

"Yes, sir; it's pretty tough on us."

"At least you shall have no cause to suffer. I will take care of you. Are you an actor?"

"No, sir. I'm the property man and business manager. This is my assistant, Micky Free."

"Well, you will come with us to Mr. Steele's house, and afterward to my own. Your assistant can wait your return at the hotel, where I suppose your company is stopping. If you are ready, Mr. Steele, we will go now."

The party boarded the auto and were soon at the magistrate's home.

Lawyer Benton examined the contents of the bag and said that, as far as he could see, everything taken from his house was there.

The bag was placed in the auto, which started for the Benton residence.

Sam went along.

The boy was introduced by the lawyer to his family, consisting of his wife, a pretty seventeen-year old daughter and a young son, as the person to whom they were indebted for the recovery of their property.

Sam was regarded with a great deal of consideration.

Nothing was said about his connection with the theatrical profession.

The lawyer took him into his library and told him that he thought his services were worth \$1,000, and he proposed to give him that sum.

Sam was rather dazed by the amount.

He managed to say that he thought the lawyer was treating him better than he deserved.

"Not at all," replied Mr. Benton. "I will take you to the bank presently and draw it for you."

The lawyer then inquired about Sam's connection with the company, and asked him what kind of an aggregation it was.

Sam told him how he came to join Downey Grab's outfit, which was solely for the purpose of learning how to run a company himself, as his ambition was to become a theatrical manager.

"There's millions in it," he said, "if you can put out an attraction that will hit the public. I intend to be a successful manager some day, but, of course, I have to begin at the bottom of the ladder and climb."

"There is certainly money in the theatrical business if one has the ability to make it a success, just as there is a fortune in any other large enterprise for the man who is built the right way," said the lawyer. "You look smart, and if you are fitted for the theatrical business I see no reason why you should not succeed. The thousand dollars I shall presently turn over to you may be the nucleus from which you will carve a fortune, but it will all depend on yourself. Now I am also inclined to do something for these people who have been thrown over by their manager. You say you had no house last night."

"No, sir. It was an awful frost," said Sam.

"Well, I will use my influence to get you up a benefit at the opera house."

"They would appreciate your kindness very much. The majority of them have no money at all, and would have to walk out of the village unless I came to their aid, which, of course, I would do. I would allow none of them to suffer as long as I had a cent," said Sam, earnestly.

"You could put on the same piece that you played last night, since as you had a poor audience it would be as new to the people as anything else. What was the name of the play?"

"The Lights of a Great City," replied Sam. "It's a stirring melodrama. We have three other pieces in our repertory. We use them when we play three nights in a town, changing the bill nightly. Perhaps the people here

would prefer a rural drama. We have a very good one called 'Down on the Farm.'"

"You can suit yourselves. Have a talk with the company, and then call at my office on Main Street—anybody will tell you where it is—before half-past four, and I will go into the benefit with you."

"All right, Mr. Benton, but there's no doubt but the company will accept your proposition joyfully, for they need the money," said Sam.

Sam was invited to remain at the lawyer's house for an early lunch, after which Mr. Benton took him to the bank in his auto and handed him the \$1,000.

CHAPTER IX.

THE STARTLING IDEA OF MILLIONS IN IT.

Sam found the company holding a symposium on the hotel veranda, and he laid before them the proposition of the proposed benefit.

Needless to say that the offer was accepted by acclamation, and the Thespians voted the lawyer a brick and entitled to their most grateful thanks.

Sam said that he would attend to all the arrangements with Mr. Benton, and that he did not doubt but they would have a good house.

"It can't take place before to-morrow night, and in the meanwhile how are we going to fix things with the landlord here?" asked Johnson.

"Don't worry about that," replied Sam. "I'm going to talk to him now. If he kicks I'll refer him to Mr. Benton."

Sam went inside and interviewed the boniface.

When he heard that Mr. Benton was going to engineer a benefit for the stranded people he became quite affable, for the lawyer was the most important person in Plainfield.

All he wanted was some assurance of the fact.

"I'll see that you get it, Mr. Thompson," said Sam. "In fact, if the benefit is a good one we may pay half of the bill that the manager jumped, though we are in no way responsible for it."

The prospect of recovering half of his loss put the landlord in excellent humor, and his grouch against the professionals disappeared entirely.

"Did yez get somethin' from the lawyer for savin' his property?" asked Micky, when Sam left the landlord.

"Yes; he acted quite liberal with me. He is a perfect gentleman," said Sam.

"How much did yez get?"

"I'd rather not say, Micky; but it was more than I expected."

"I s'pose we'll get enough out of the benefit to give us a lift. Now that we have the scenery and props the people are figurin' on runnin' the show on the commonwealth plan, with yez as actin' manager," said Micky.

"I have a different plan."

"What is it?"

"If the company will turn the scenery and props over to me, which I think they might do as they wouldn't have got hold of them only for me, I'll run the show myself as

manager, and be responsible for everything, including salary, from this time out."

"Do yez think it'll pay yez to take the risk? Thim railroads ate up a lot of the profits. I heard Downey Grab say wanst that if it wasn't for transportation charges and hotel expinses he'd make a fortune."

"I have no doubt he would make money. It's easy enough to cheat the company out of their salaries, but you can't get tick from the railroads or the boarding houses."

My idea is to do away with the railroads and the boarding-houses so that the company will have a surer chance for their money."

"Do away wid the railroads and boardin'-houses!" exclaimed Micky in a tone of astonishment. "How would yez cover your route, and how would we ate and slape?"

"Don't you worry. We wouldn't have to walk, and we'd have three square meals and a bed apiece," said Sam, confidently.

"Begorra, then it's a magician yez are. Thim would be happy times for the profession. We could stay out the whole year around at that rate."

"Well, I'll let you into my secret later on. There's millions in it, and I've got more ideas than one."

"Faith, if yez can do as yez say yez must be a b'y of ideas."

Sam and Micky returned to the professionals, who were now fully decided on continuing the tour on their own hook with Sam as the manager.

The expected benefit ought to furnish them with enough funds to give them all the start they wanted.

Sam butted in and told them that he was going to run the show himself, on his own responsibility, if they agreed to sign with him at about the same salaries Grab had promised, but failed to pay them.

"We wouldn't mind having you for our angel, Sharpley, but where is your money coming from?" asked Robinson.

"The lawyer has backed me," answered Sam.

"The dickens he has!" exclaimed all in one voice, much astonished.

"But the understanding is that you are to present me with the scenery and props, in return for which I'll guarantee that the ghost will walk every Monday afternoon, unless business gets so bad that no money is taken in at all, which I hardly think will be the case," said Sam.

"We'll go with you," said Johnson. "What do you say, ladies and gents?"

There wasn't a note of dissent.

Salaries, low but sure, were preferable to the precarious commonwealth plan, which guaranteed nothing.

"The full particulars of the new season I'll disclose to you after the benefit. They will rather surprise you, but I think your chances of remaining out under my arrangements will be better than under a dozen managers like Grab," said Sam.

"Grab be blessed! He's a regular barnacle. We don't want to hear any more about him," said Polonius Kerr, the leading man.

At half-past four Sam presented himself at Lawyer Benton's office, and that gentleman went over the details of the benefit with him.

The printing was to be got out at once at the Clarion office, and circulated the first thing in the morning.

Mr. Benton said he had already spoken to a number of his friends and acquaintances, and they had agreed to come with their families.

Fox, at his request, had consented to loan the hall at the bare cost of running it for the night.

Half the village would hear about the benefit before the bills were out, so that only a moderate amount of advertising would be necessary.

As soon as the benefit matter had been settled Sam asked the lawyer who the canal-boat in the creek belonged to.

"To me," said Mr. Benton.

"Are you using it?"

"No. I have no use for it. I've tried to sell it, but nobody wanted it."

"What will you take for it?"

"Who wants it?"

"I do."

"You!" exclaimed the surprised lawyer.

"Yes, sir."

"What use can you make of her?"

"I'll tell you. My plan is to fit the hold up with sleeping and eating accommodations for the company, which is going out in a few days under my management, and on the deck I intend to build a small stage at one end, using the rest of the deck as far as the house cabin for the auditorium, which I shall enclose with a roof and sides of canvas to protect the audience from the weather," said Sam. "That is the first one of several ideas I have for making a million out of the theatrical business."

Mr. Benton sat back in his chair and stared at the boy.

"Upon my word, that is quite an original idea of yours, to conduct a marine theatre, but the question is, will it pay?" he said.

"I feel sure that it will. I will be able to do away with railroad transportation to a considerable extent, also hotel and boarding-house charges. I can get the people to work for lower salaries by furnishing them with board and residence. It is a novel idea and will appeal to the company at the start, and if the idea does not grow upon them I shall be surprised. We can be a sort of happy family. We can keep out all year around, thus affording permanent employment to people who ordinarily are lucky if they are working half the time. The chances are all in favor of them getting their money, whereas under the management of such rascals as Downey Grab they received more promises than lucre."

"That's all very well, Sharpley, but you will be obliged to tour only the waterways of the States hereabouts."

"Not necessarily. After we get on our feet we can, after playing a river town, tour the immediate neighborhood by short rail trips, or even by wagon, leaving the boat anchored till our return in charge of a watchman. While on the boat I will save the customary thirty-five per cent. that the proprietors of opera houses ask. I will get the gross receipts, see?"

"Do you think people will patronize a marine theatre?"

"Why not. They will do it if only for the novelty. If I saw such a show advertised to-morrow I'd go to it to see what it looked like."

"I don't know but I would, too," said the lawyer. "But there is one difficulty which you seem to have overlooked."

How do you propose to sail your boat from one point to another? You can't always find a tug."

"I shall charter a tug for an indefinite time, and keep it with me. I dare say I'll be able to find a small one at Darien that will suit the purpose."

"It will cost you something to build your stage and otherwise fit the canal-boat up. I suppose you will use the deck cabin for a cook house and your own private quarters?"

"That's my idea. At the start I shall persuade the women to do the cooking by turn—it will tickle them for awhile. I'll hire a good carpenter, and talk the actors into helping him do the work, under his directions. It will be recreation for them; for it won't last long enough to dampen their enthusiasm in the enterprise. I will need a scene painter to furnish the proscenium and the drop curtain, as well as to touch up the cloths we have, perhaps paint one or two fresh ones. In fact I propose to make use of my people to help me out, as the scheme ought to be to their advantage as well as my own," said Sam.

Before the boy had finished unfolding his plans, the lawyer, who had a leaning towards the drama, became somewhat enthused over the idea, too.

He told Sam that if he ran short of funds in getting his marine theatre started he would loan him enough to see him through.

Sam thanked him, but said he hoped to be able to pull through without a loan.

"Darien is a large town, and I intend to play the company a week there while we are fitting up the boat, which I shall have towed down there the day after to-morrow if you will sell the boat cheap."

"You can have the boat for nothing, Sharpley, and welcome. I see no prospect of selling it except for firewood. If you can turn it to the use you are thinking of why take it. It will save you the cost of buying another elsewhere."

"That is very kind of you, Mr. Benton, and I appreciate your generosity very much. Everything counts at the start, and even with the boat as a gift it will take about all of the \$1,000, and most of what I expect to pull in at Darien during next week, to get under way."

"I should judge it will; but if you need more don't fail to wire me and I will see that you get whatever you may need."

That ended the interview.

The lawyer went off home in his auto while Sam returned to the hotel, after stopping at the Clarion office and handing in copy for the benefit printing.

CHAPTER X.

SAM GETS DOWN TO BUSINESS.

The bills for the benefit, which were delivered at seven next morning, read:

"To-night at the opera house. Under the auspices of Mr. George Benton and leading citizens of Plainfield a benefit will be tendered to the members of the late Downey Grab Stock Co., who are stranded in the village. The committee in charge of the affair has selected the beautiful pastoral drama of 'Down on the Farm' for representation. This drama has been played by various companies throughout the United States for more than 3,000 nights, and is still drawing crowded houses where presented. It

is a play that appeals to every one. Don't miss this opportunity of seeing a play that will live in your memories for many a day. 'Down on the Farm' is a gem—a True Story of Human Hearts. The cast is a strong one, embracing the entire company. Prices 10, 20, 30 cents. Reserved seats on sale at Brown's drug and Carter's stationery stores."

Sam and Micky spent the best part of the morning billing the village for the benefit.

They found that most of the people knew about it already, for the news had flown from mouth to mouth.

The bills, however, told them the particulars, and as a pastoral drama had not visited that place in many moons they felt a strong desire to witness "Down on the Farm."

After dinner, the two boys, with a few bills in their clothes, started for the suburbs to circulate them among the farmers and their hired hands.

Unger and Robinson went on the same errand in the opposite direction, while the rest of the masculine performers went out on the north and south sides of Plainfield.

All had a common interest in drumming up a big house.

On their way, Sam and Micky came in sight of the canal-boat in the creek, and the former thought it a good chance to look the boat over.

He told Micky all about his scheme of a marine theatre, and the Irish lad was quite taken with the idea.

"Begorra, it's a great head yez have, Sam," he said. "Sure our people will fale as happy as clams at low tide. No hustlin' to catch a train after the show, wid a walk to the boardin'-house at the nixt stoppin' place in prospect. All they'll have to do will be to slape, and ate, and dress for the show, and draw their salaries on Monday afternoon. Faith, it'll be a regular picnic for this, so it will."

The boys went all over the boat, and Sam explained where the bunks for the men would be placed, and where those for the three women would go, with a dividing partition between with a door.

"The two sleeping-rooms will answer for dressing-rooms as well, and they'll be right under the stage, with a ladder apiece to reach it through a trap opening," said Sam. "Aft of the sleeping quarters will be the dining-room, provided with a long stationary table, with a bench on either side in place of chairs. The main hatch will have to be done away with and boarded over, as it will come about in the center of the auditorium. I'll have a small hatch made in the floor of the deck cabin, with a flight of stairs so that the dishes and food can be carried down that way. And I'll have the hold lighted and ventilated with a dozen small windows cut in the sides just under the deck. At night we'll use lamps to illuminate the whole boat."

They spent some time on the boat, and then they left to distribute the bills among such of the rural population as they could reach.

As they were aiming for a certain farmhouse they saw in the near distance, they spied a very countrified fellow coming toward them with an axe over his shoulder.

They stopped him and handed him a bill of the show.

The farmer looked at it curiously.

He read in big letters: "To-night at the Opera House."

Then he uttered a howl, tore the bill into pieces and glared at the boys.

"For the love of Mike!" ejaculated Micky. "Has this chap escaped from a lunatic asylum?"

Sam was astonished at the farmer's conduct.

"What's the matter? Why did you destroy that play-bill?" he asked.

The ruralite swung his axe-handle menacingly.

"Get out of my way, you play-actors, or I'll bust your heads open," he cried.

"He's as mad as a March hare," said Micky. "The constables ought to be here to take charge of him or he'll be after doin' some wan an injury."

With an angry roar the farmer tried to carry out his threat.

Sam grabbed the axe by the handle, while Micky seized the hayseed around the waist from behind.

The boys found the husky chap a mighty hard proposition to handle.

Fortunately for them two horsemen hove in sight at that moment.

The newcomers rode hastily upon the scene, dismounted and interfered in the struggle.

They were the head constable of Plainfield and one of his assistants.

"What's the trouble?" asked Constable White. "Why are you fighting with these boys, Pettigrew?"

"Sure the man is plum crazy, sor," said Micky.

"Play actors!" cried the farmer, pointing his finger at them.

Sam explained the situation.

The constable laughed.

"The sight of an actor or a play bill has the same effect on Pettigrew as a red flag on a bull," he said.

"Why does it?" asked Sam. "Is he off his base?"

"I think he is, a little. Four actors stopped at his farm all last summer, and never paid him a cent after the first week. They told him that they were big actors from Chicago, and that they expected money from there every day. In the end they decamped, leaving two cheap trunks filled with stones behind. Since then nobody dares mention an actor to him, for it would end in a row."

"Oh!" said Sam. "Well, we're not actors. We're just distributing the bills for the benefit at the opera house to-night. The farmer's attack on us was unwarranted. We could have him arrested, but I guess we'll let him go this time if he apologizes."

The farmer, somewhat mollified by Sam's statement, made an apology and continued on his way, leaving the constable and his assistant with the boys.

The village guardian asked Sam if he was the boy who recovered Lawyer Benton's stolen property from the thieves.

Sam admitted that he was, and gave the constable all of the facts.

Then he and Micky continued on their way.

The stranded company had a rousing benefit that evening, the opera house being filled to its capacity.

Even at that the total receipts only amounted to \$115, on account of the low prices of admission.

Professor Smith donated his services, and in addition to furnishing the music between the acts, played all the incidental music of the drama.

Between the second and third acts, Sam came on the stage and played a cornet solo.

He received a tremendous encore, and then gave the "Carnival of Venice."

That earned him another recall, and he performed "The Mocking Bird," with variations.

The audience, who appreciated his artistic performance, gave him a regular ovation, and he had to show himself twice again before the performance was allowed to proceed.

The expenses of the show were small, and when the net receipts were divided evenly, each person got about \$10.

That wasn't a whole lot, but it was more than some of them had since the second week of the tour.

Next morning Sam called them together and explained his plan to them.

He asked them if they were willing to embark in it.

They were, but wanted to know what he was going to deduct for board and bunk.

"Two dollars a week each for sleeping accommodations," replied Sam. "As for eating, the most satisfactory way will be to make mess charges. I will purchase all that is necessary in the way of good wholesome food and other things, keeping a regular book account of the same. At the end of each week the account will be added up and each person on board will be assessed pro rata to settle it. That will reduce the cost of board to a fair and equitable standard. The ladies of the company can volunteer to act as cook by turns, or we will hire one. In the latter case her wages will have to be met by an extra assessment."

The ladies declared they would do the cooking to save money.

"How long will it take you to get started?" asked Robinson.

"About a week," replied Sam.

"And we'll have to lay off during that time?"

"Not if I can secure the opera house in Darien! I am going there by the ten o'clock train to make arrangements for at least three nights if possible. As it is a manufacturing town of some size I think we ought to do well."

"When do you expect to get back—to-night?" asked Unger.

"Possibly; if not I'll return to-morrow."

Sam went on to Darien, twelve miles away, alone.

Before he went he and Micky took the full measurements of the canal-boat, and he carried the figures with him.

When he reached Darien the first thing he did was to call on the proprietor of the opera house.

He introduced himself as the manager of Sharpley's Stock Co.

The owner of the opera house told him that he had the whole of the next week open, and could give him any night or nights he wanted.

"Thursday, Friday and Saturday are the best nights for a good show," he said. "Saturday matinee always draws, too, if the bill is such as will attract ladies and children. What have you got to offer?"

"We have four plays: 'Lights of a Great City,' a city melodrama; 'Down on the Farm,' a rural play that appeals to the sympathies and is devoid of clap-trap; 'Ten Nights in a Bar-room,' and an old favorite, and 'The Girl of Golden Gulch,' a wild west drama."

"They ought to draw here, if you have a good company, for three nights and a matinee, starting Thursday with the city melodrama, following it with 'Ten Nights,' putting on the rural play at the matinee, and the Western drama Saturday night. Saturday night is the best of the week,

for you'll catch the factory people, and they like something strong," said the proprietor.

"I'll guarantee that my company is above the average," said Sam. "I suppose all managers say the same thing."

"They certainly do. We've got to take them as they come, in the intervals between shows of acknowledged merit, or keep the house dark. I can't afford to be too particular, especially at this time, when three dates in succession were cancelled on me—two of them A1 shows that were to play one night this week and two next. The other, which I know nothing about, went to pieces last Monday at Dexter, from which circumstances I apprehend we did not lose a great deal. Under these conditions you are sure to do business next week if your people and plays are half-way good."

"I'm glad to hear it. I'll fill in Thursday to Saturday of next week at sixty-five per cent. What is the seating capacity of the house?"

"Nearly 600, but 100 more can find standing room without blocking the aisles, which the law forbids."

Sam asked a lot of questions, and among other things he learned that the proprietor furnished an orchestra of three pieces, which could be supplemented by mutual arrangement; that his stock of scenery consisted of eight sets, comprising a garden, wood, landscape, street, dungeon, cottage, parlor and a salon with large entrance, which could be backed either with the garden or the parlor cloth; that the house was lighted throughout with electricity; that there were two real dressing-rooms under the stage; and that he furnished one stage helper.

The boy also learned that there were two papers in the town, one of which, the Times, came out every other day, and the other once a week, and that the proprietor of the opera-house owned the bill-posting boards.

"What 'paper' have you?" asked the proprietor.

Sam had to admit that he had no printing at all, and then explained that the former manager of the show had skipped back to Chicago, and he had taken charge of the company himself and was starting anew.

"Last night we played to the capacity of the Plainfield opera house, and the people are resting till I can open up a new route," he said.

The proprietor looked rather glum at that, for it didn't speak well for the show, and he might have refused to take Sam on but for the fact that he was hard up for an attraction.

"I dare say I can get out what printing is required at an office here," went on Sam. "I can pay for the best."

"Yes, you can do that. I shall want four stands, 15 3-sheets, 50 1-sheets, 50 one-half sheets, besides the usual small bills, and I ought to have 75 lithos, but of course you can't furnish them. I'll go half on the newspapers."

"I'll put out a wagon, with a painted frame-work, and our band inside. That ought to advertise the show well," said Sam.

"That will be first rate. You can send it through the factory streets and the business streets, and at night through the residential section."

"Say, as you tell me Saturday night of this week is open, what's the matter with our opening at the matinee with 'Ten Nights' and putting on 'Lights of a Great City' in the evening? Then the house programme will announce our

return on Thursday, Friday and Saturday of next week with a change of bill."

"That's all right, provided you give a good show on Saturday, otherwise there will be no use of you showing next week."

"I'll take the risk. It will be an advantage to you to see what kind of company I have."

"All right, but it will take extra printing in case I agree to the other dates."

"That's right. It will pay."

The matter was duly arranged, and Sam hastened off to the largest printing plant in town and left his order, paying a bonus to have it all turned out by morning.

He ordered some cards to be printed that afternoon, as he intended to call at the newspaper offices as soon as possible.

While waiting for them he went down to the river front and inquired about a tug.

He found there were two, one of which was laid up for lack of work, and which would answer his purpose.

He arranged with the owner to go down to the creek and bring the canal-boat to Darien, together with his company, all their effects and the baggage.

He then telegraphed instructions to Micky.

After that he returned to the printing office and got his cards.

He visited the newspaper offices and saw the dramatic editors of each, and talked his show up.

Then he arranged for an advertisement in each.

By that time it was after five, so he went to a cheap hotel and registered.

CHAPTER XI.

THE OPENING OF SAM'S MARINE THEATRE.

The 'paper' was promptly delivered at the opera house by nine next morning, and the proprietor called on his poster to put it out.

This expense was to be charged up against the show.

Sam looked up a carpenter and builder, gave him the dimensions of the canal-boat, told him what he wanted done, and asked him to estimate on the job.

He called on two other carpenters, submitted his specifications, and requested a bid from each.

Then he called on the proprietor of the opera house, who carried on a hardware store under the theatre, which was on the second floor, and after a short talk about the show in hand, asked him if there was a scene painter in town.

"Yes, the man who painted some of my scenery has a house-painting shop around the corner. If you want anything in the scenic line he'll do it up in good shape, and cheap for cash," said the proprietor.

"I'll go around and see him," said Sam, and he did.

He told the painter what he wanted done, and the man said he could do it all right, and anything else in the theatrical painting line.

Sam gave him the dimensions of the canvas that was to be used for the proscenium—three pieces, to be put together later on the framework.

He also furnished him with the size of the drop-curtain, and they decided on a subject between them—the bay of

Naples, with Vesuvius in the distance, and the town in the background.

The most important object was to be a fishing-smack in the middle foreground, with several gaudy-looking sailors on her, the whole brilliantly lighted up with sunset effects.

Sam paid him a suitable deposit and then went down to the office of the tug owner to see if he had sent the tug to the creek.

The tug had gone.

Then Sam made arrangements with an expressman for so many hours continuous service as soon as he could get the framework built, and the canvas lettered—a job he had also given to the painter.

He got the address of a cheap boarding-house from the proprietor of the opera house, called there and arranged for keep of the company as soon as they arrived.

Then he went to his hotel for lunch, and found the estimates of the three carpenters awaiting him.

He went over them carefully, while at the table, and finally selected the lowest bidder.

After lunch he called on him and made a contract with him.

He walked around and inspected some of the posting, all of which was up.

He felt like a real manager as he gazed on the big bills which informed the public that Sharpley's Stock Company, from Chicago, would play "Ten Nights in a Bar-room" at the matinee, and "Lights of a Great City" in the evening, at Lowe's Opera House, on the following day.

The tri-weekly paper, which came out that afternoon, commented favorably on the Sharpley Stock Co.

For lack of authentic information, and in consideration of the advertisement, the editor had accepted Sam's flattering tale of his show, and printed it.

The Weekly Blade would be out next morning, and Sam had no doubt he would receive a similar favorable notice in that.

As a matter of fact he did.

Micky, the company, and the baggage arrived early next morning on the canal-boat.

The baggage was sent to the opera house and the company to the boarding-house.

At nine o'clock the express wagon appeared in front of the opera house, with its large transparency roughly lettered in red and black, as follows, on both sides, and the rear end:

"Lowe's Opera House—Sharpley's Stock Company—Matinee, two p. m., 'Ten Nights in a Barroom.'—This evening at Eight, 'Lights of a Great City'—A Thrilling Melodrama of city life.—Popular Prices, 10, 20 and 30 cents."

The male performers, with their instruments, supplemented with a bass and snare drummer combined, got in, and then the driver, having his directions, started off at a walking gait.

The music soon attracted attention, and the town gradually learned about the show that was in the place.

After parading a couple of the main streets the wagon proceeded to the residence section to notify the ladies and children about the matinee.

At half-past twelve it dumped the performers out at the boarding-house for dinner.

The driver then got his own dinner at a restaurant and

spent the afternoon in driving around with the bass and snare drummer.

In the meantime Sam had piloted the carpenter down to the canal-boat, and they went over the plans again, which required some alteration.

The stage was to overlap the bows of the boat a few feet on either side, and was to have a depth of ten feet inside the curtain or proscenium line, in front of which it was to extend two feet more.

The opening was to be nearly the full width of the boat, and ten feet high, and there would be three feet of space in the flies for hanging the scenery.

The customary grooves were to be provided for in the wings, and when completed it promised to be quite a practical little theatre.

Sam returned to the hotel for lunch, and then went directly to the opera house.

Already there was a line of small boys, and some girls respectably attired, waiting for the box office to open.

The proprietor supplied both a box clerk and a door tender, and all Sam had to do was to stand on the door and keep watch for his own interests.

The company had already arrived and were getting ready.

Sam had tipped them off to do their best, as everything depended on the show given that afternoon and evening.

Modern costumes being mostly used in both pieces, their small stock sufficed to see them through.

Micky and the regular stage hand were able to do all the work, so there was no cause for Sam to worry himself about that.

Stage manager Johnson would see that everything went right.

The opera house was well filled when the overture began, and the ladies and young people were coming in in encouraging numbers.

When the curtain rose on the first act there was not an empty seat left.

At the close of the first act Sam went to the box office to count the house.

His share amounted to \$91, which he received.

Between the third and fourth act he treated the audience to his cornet solo, and, as usual, scored a hit.

The company gave a good performance of "Ten Nights in a Barroom," and the spectators were satisfied they had got the worth of their money.

The actors went back to the boarding-house for their supper in good spirits.

Sam went to his hotel in good spirits, too, for he looked for a big house that evening.

He was not disappointed.

The sign S. R. O. (standing room only) was put out before eight.

People continued to buy general admission tickets, however, knowing they would have to stand at the back of the house, or along the side walls.

Sam collected \$102 from the proprietor as his share of the night performance.

The total of both shows amounted to \$193.

Out of this sum he had to pay for the bill posting, half of the newspaper advertising, and some other small bills.

The printing and the expressman he had already paid,

but on his book he properly deducted the amount from his receipts.

The actors were not under regular contract with him yet, and would not be until his marine theatre began its watery tour.

They were to pay their own board and receive pay only for the performances in which they took part.

Sam got his other three dates for the following week, and on Monday he got out fresh printing, and arranged for the paper he intended to use on his water route.

He engaged the expressman for Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday, and had a new transparency lettered.

The band was to accompany it as before.

During the week Sam passed most of his time on the canal-boat keeping the carpenters and painters on the hustle, and by Friday the marine theatre was finished.

As the entire exterior of the boat had to be painted, and the hold thoroughly cleaned and whitewashed, he put all the male members of the show at work doing it, beginning on Monday.

For this service he agreed to pay them the same as if they performed on the first three nights.

"The Lights of a Great City" was repeated on Thursday night to a full house.

"Ten Nights in a Bar-room" enjoyed good business on Friday night.

"Down on the Farm" filled the theatre at the Saturday matinee, and "The Girl of Golden Gulch" drew another packed house in the evening.

The four performances brought Sam in \$375, with a total of \$568 for the six.

After settling all expenses for the six shows, including seven days' salary to his company, at the Downey Grab rate, he found he had made a profit of \$200.

Seats for about 300 people had been put aboard the boat, and on Sunday morning everything was ready for the transfer of the company to their new quarters.

The Times printed an interesting story of the marine theatre on Wednesday, and that attracted many people to the wharf where the canal-boat was moored in the hands of the carpenters and painters.

A reporter of the Saturday Blade photographed the nearly completed theatre on Friday afternoon, and a half-tone reproduction of it appeared next morning in the paper, with another story.

That brought quite a crowd on Sunday morning.

Sam determined to take advantage of it, and he put up a sign announcing that a special performance would be given that afternoon—admission 10, 20 and 30 cents.

He was sorry now that he had not advertised a show in the Blade, but the idea had not struck him in time.

However, whatever was taken in would be clear gain, even if it was only a slim attendance.

The news that a performance would be given at the new marine theatre was circulated around by those who visited the wharf in the morning, and as a result so many people came that they could not all be admitted.

Sam took in about \$80 at the portable box office he had built for the purpose.

The hastily arranged show consisted of one act from "Ten Nights in a Bar room," and an act from "Down on the Farm."

Between these there was an olio which commenced with Sam's cornet solo, with piano accompaniment.

Then followed a vaudeville sketch given by Charley Unger and the soubrette, after which several of the other performers gave recitations and a scene from one of Shakespeare's plays.

Altogether the first performance on the marine theatre was a big success.

The scene painter was engaged on three new scenes, and as it would take the whole of the coming week to finish them, and touch up the old ones, Sam decided to advertise another performance for Wednesday night.

He announced that "Down on the Farm" would be repeated, and the play drew a full house, at least fifty people being obliged to stand.

He took in \$85.

He had no opera house owner to divide with now, consequently the gross receipts went into his pocket.

Sam Sharpley's "Marine Theatre" thus started under very encouraging auspices.

CHAPTER XII.

THE MARINE THEATRE ON ITS ROUTE.

"Begorra, if yez kin draw the people like yez did on Sunday and last night yez will do mighty well, I'm thinkin'," said Micky, on Thursday morning.

"Yes, I did very well, but I can't expect to always have a full house," said Sam.

"Oh, I dunno. Faith, this is a great novelty, and I'll bet people will come to the boat that might not go to the opera house. Are yez goin' to give another show on Saturday night?"

"I'd like to, but there's a big attraction at Lowe's theatre on Saturday—a New York company in 'The Girl and the Curl.' We've done this town pretty well, and I don't know that they will stand for any more from us, particularly as I have nothing new to offer."

"Where do yez open nixt?"

"At Leesville, ten miles down the river. I'm figuring on taking the boat down there for a show on Saturday night. The scenery we are waiting for can be sent to us by rail next week. We don't need it for 'Down on the Farm,' so I could put that on the bill for Saturday night."

"That would be just the thing, begorra. Why don't yez do it?"

Sam called on the owner of the tugboat and told him that his contract would begin next day when he was to tow the marine temple of the drama down to Leesville.

After dinner, leaving the boat in charge of Micky, he took the train for the next town, with a bundle of small printing, for he didn't believe that the proprietor of the Leesville opera house would rent him his billboards.

Reaching his destination, he registered at one of the hotels for the night, and started out to learn what, if any attraction he would be up against on Saturday.

The boardings showed him that a repertory company, somewhat like his own, held the date.

His paper was all over town.

The fact that he would have opposition did not bother Sam a whole lot.

He hired an expressman for Saturday, and gave a painter an order for a transparency reading as follows:

"Sharpley's Stock Co.—At the New Marine Theatre, Taylor's Wharf—Matinee to-day at two: 'Down on the Farm'—to-night at eight: 'Girl of Golden Gulch.'—Popular Prices 10, 20 and 30 cents. Change of bill for Sunday matinee and night."

Then he telegraphed Micky to bring on the show and make fast to Taylor's wharf, where he had secured dockage.

Leesville had two weekly newspapers, one of which came out on Saturday.

Next morning he went to the office of that paper and inserted an advertisement, saw the editor and talked up his show.

Then he hired a stout boy to help him with a pastepot and a bunch of single-sheet posters which read: "To-night—Sharpley's Stock Company.—At the Marine Theatre on the river front—Popular Prices 10, 20, 30 cents."

Over the word "To-night" he put a paster reading: "Saturday and Sunday afternoon at Two, Evening at eight," and at the bottom, "Taylor's Wharf."

He slapped these up all over town where he could find a vacant and suitable spot, and they attracted a lot of attention.

He missed his dinner at the hotel, as he didn't finish till about four o'clock, but a restaurant furnished him with a meal as soon as he was done.

Then he went down to the wharf and found that his floating show had just arrived.

Quite a bunch of curious people had gone down to Taylor's wharf to see what the marine theatre was, and were in time to see the tug bring it down the river with the band playing at intervals and the streamers labeled "Sharpley's Stock Co." and the "Marine Theatre," flying fore and aft.

The crowd on the wharf increased as the music drew the people to the water front.

Micky put out a big sign which informed everybody that a dramatic show would be given on the following afternoon and evening, and also on Sunday.

Spectators kept coming to the wharf, and as it grew dark the Japanese lanterns suspended from stem to stern were lighted, just as if a show was on.

The floating theatre was advertised around the town by everybody who had been down at the wharf.

It was a new idea in theatricals, and the people were curious to visit it.

They could go to the opera house any time there was an attraction there, but the marine theatre would only be in Leesville over Saturday and Sunday.

Another crowd of idlers was on hand in the morning.

The express wagon came down there to get the band, after which it paraded the principal streets.

The advance agent for the repertory show that was to give the matinee and evening performance at the opera house visited the wharf about the time the wagon started.

He inquired for the manager, and Sam was pointed out to him.

"Are you Mr. Sharpley?" he asked.

"That's my name," said Sam.

"My name is Nick Whiffle. I'm advance agent for the Gouley Company that plays the opera house this afternoon and to-night. Allow me to hand you my card."

"Glad to know you, Mr. Whiffle. Step aboard."

The advance agent accepted the invitation, for he was curious to see what the marine theatre amounted to.

The auditorium was covered in with canvas, and ventilated like a circus tent.

Three hundred folding camp-chairs, with backs, faced the stage, with an aisle in the center.

The stanch supports that held up the canvas were painted white and decorated with small flags, and to each was secured a lamp with a reflector.

The curtain was up, showing the setting of the first act of "Down on the Farm," which was to be given at the matinee.

Everything was bright, clean and attractive.

"Upon my word, you have a nobby little theatre," the agent was obliged to admit. "But I don't see how you can do much business down on the river front when you have opposition at the opera house."

"Maybe you'll see this afternoon. I give a matinee at two, and so does your company. You have had all the advantage of the boardings and earlier posting, but I've done my best to advertise my show since I came to town Thursday night. This theatre is a novelty and ought to draw. Besides I have a good company. They're actors, not ham-fatters."

"You board your people on shore, don't you?"

"No. The hold of the boat is fitted up as living apartments, sleeping and dressing-rooms."

"Is this your own scheme?"

"It is—one of my ideas for the beginning of making a million in the show business."

"A million in the show business, eh?" grinned the advance man.

"Why not? There's millions in it. It only needs a person with ideas to dig it out."

"It takes something besides ideas—money and nerve."

"Half of the traveling managers depend wholly on the latter."

The agent grinned.

"I hope you'll have a house this afternoon, but I'm afraid we'll keep the crowd away from you," he said.

"I'm not worrying about that. I think the marine theater will get its share."

The advance agent didn't believe it.

His company had a New York attraction, and he was of the opinion that no other show could buck against it successfully.

Sam treated him, and then they parted.

The ladies of the marine show had dinner ready when the express wagon brought the male contingent back from the parade at half past twelve.

Before dinner was over a crowd began to collect on the wharf, which grew rapidly with numerous accessions.

Women and children were in the majority.

Sam began selling tickets at a quarter-past one, and the people fairly stormed the portable box office on the wharf.

At twenty minutes of two every seat in the house was taken, and the S. R. O. sign was displayed.

Finally even standing room was at a premium, every available place having been taken.

Ladies and children were still coming, and Sam was reluctantly obliged to turn them away.

As it was a warm day, and fans were in requisition, Sam

conceived the idea of casting off from the wharf, and giving his audience a cool sail while the show went on.

He communicated with the man in charge of the tug.

The banked fire was started up, and by the time the first act was on the marine show was under way down the river.

The sail was an unexpected luxury, and the spectators were delighted with it.

The show at the opera house in the meantime had a very thin attendance.

Some of the people turned away from the marine theatre went there late, but altogether it looked like a frost.

Sam took in nearly \$100, and he got every cent of it.

The boat returned to the wharf before the last act was finished and was made fast again.

After supper the band played for awhile, and by seven there was a rapidly accumulating mob on the dock all waiting to get on the boat.

At fifteen minutes to eight Sam had sold as many admissions as he dared, for every seat, nook and corner of the auditorium was filled.

During the show the boat went down the river as before.

This was an added expense for fuel on Sam, but he believed it would pay as an added inducement for people to come next day.

The opera house had a very poor Saturday night crowd.

When it came to a showdown the marine theatre had copped the patronage.

CHAPTER XIII.

DOWN THE ILLINOIS.

"Begorra, we're doin' the business all right," said Micky after the show to Manager Sharpley.

"We certainly are. If I turned one person away I've turned a hundred at both shows."

"Sure thim as was turned away kin come to-morrow."

"A great many of them were people who probably do not patronize a show on Sunday."

"Thin they will lose a trate. I'll bet lots of people who wouldn't go to the opera house on Sunday would visit the boat. It's just like goin' to Coney Island at New York."

"Well, we'll see what business we'll do to-morrow."

"Yez did fine business offhand at Darien, where we started, on last Sunday. How much did yez take in to-day?"

"A little over \$200."

"And yez don't have to hand thirty-five per cent of that over to any opera house owner. That's sixty dollars there in your jeans."

"I know, but I've got to pay so much a day for the tug whether we show or not; and then there's the money I've put into the boat."

"Faith, yez'll get that all back ag'in in no time. Yez'll save enough in railroad transportation to pay for the tug. Then yez get \$20 a week from the tin of us for slapin' accommodation. That's \$1,000 in a year. Won't that pay for the expense you've been to in fittin' up the boat?"

"Yes, if the marine show keeps out a year."

"What's to prevent it? We're way up on the Illinois River. That run into the Mississippi, and it will take us

a long time to get down. There are lots of small rivers on our route, and they have towns and villages on them. Can't we take thim in? And whin we strike the Mississippi above St. Louis can't we go all the way up that? And thin down ag'in to the Missouri. And all the way out that and back. And thin on down the Mississippi to New Orleans. And back to the Arkansas. And after doin' that we kin go East over the Ohio clear to Pinnsylvania. Sure, Sam, me b'y, the waterways of the country is your oyster. All yez have to do is to nurse a good thing. Begorra yez was right whin yez said there's millions in it."

"I see you've got the route down pretty fine, Micky," laughed Sam.

"Faith I have. If yez carried the company over all that ground by rail, how much do yez think it would cost yez?"

"A whole lot of money."

"Yez kin gamble on that and win ivery time. It's the transportation charges that knock out the small shows whin they mate wid poor business."

"And suppose we meet with a long streak of poor business?"

"I don't belave we will. As long as we kin pay for the tug and git enough to ate we kin kape on the move. Salaries kin wait whin the money ain't comin' in."

"But a moment ago you agreed that there was millions in it, so don't talk about the ghost not walking regularly."

"There isn't much doubt but it will walk on Monday."

At that moment the soubrette came up and asked Sam and Micky why they didn't come to the deck cabin and get the coffee and sandwiches that were ready there.

"Everybody is through, but you two," she said. "Come on."

So they went to partake of the light midnight repast.

The marine theatre was packed next day at both performances and Sam took in nearly \$200 more.

The show had evidently caught on.

Many of the people who had witnessed the performance the day before were there again, because a change of bill had been announced.

"Ten Nights in a Bar-room" was given in the afternoon, and "Lights of a Great City" at night.

The boat remained at the wharf, and probably some people were disappointed, as they looked for a sail; but the show was going to leave town in the morning for Streater, so Sam saw no use in burning extra coal.

His contract with the owner of the tug was a certain sum per day, which included the wages of the engineer and two men.

The cost of running her above that fell on Sam also, as the boy thought it a more economical arrangement for him than to pay a lump sum to the owner, who was certain to figure the margin in his own favor.

Sam and his company were asleep when the tug men, in accordance with their orders, unmoored the floating theatre and started on down the Illinois with her.

Sam was on deck when they approached Streater.

It was quite a town, and from what the young manager had heard about it he expected to do good business there, if counter attractions didn't knock him out.

The tug brought the boat aberside of the main wharf, but she was not made fast until Sam had arranged for wharfage rights.

Monday being a poor show night, Sam decided to open up on Tuesday with a matinee.

There was nothing at the opera house till Wednesday night, and the posters indicated that it was some alleged Chicago success.

Sam got out his bills with Micky's help and then sent his band out in the wagon.

He counted more on that than all the rest of his billing put together.

He had already written to Lawyer Benton, detailing results up to that point, which he felt proud of.

When the lawyer got his letter he decided to go on to Streator by rail and take a look at the marine theatre.

He arrived about noon, Tuesday, and Sam was surprised to see him step on board the boat.

"Is this really my canal-boat, or rather the one I presented to you, Sharpley?" the lawyer inquired, after they had shaken hands.

"Yes, sir; this is the boat that lay in the creek at Plainville when I got possession of her," replied Sam.

"You've made a great change in it."

"Naturally it made a great change to transform it into a floating theatre and boarding-house combined."

"When I came to think your scheme over critically I had my doubts if you could work your ideas out."

"Well, you see I have. Come, let me show you over the boat. Most of my people are away on the band-wagon, as I call it, advertising the show. We give a matinee this afternoon, and a regular performance to-night. We repeat the same to-morrow if the prospects look encouraging enough. Then we'll move on to Phoenix, for four performances is about all I think this town will stand."

Sam took the lawyer all over the boat, and Mr. Benton declared that Sam's ingenious arrangements truly surprised him.

One of the actresses was setting the table for the half-past twelve dinner and Sam pressed Mr. Benton to stay and dine with them.

"We can't offer you hotel feed, sir, but you will get an idea that we don't live bad. In fact our feeding arrangements, which are on the mess plan, will give cards and spades to the boarding-houses along the road that cheap actors have to patronize. I assure you that we are a perfectly contented family, and though we are not working on the commonwealth plan, all my people pitch in just the same and help me all they can. They are satisfied to know that salaries will be paid regularly every Monday as long as there's a shot in the locker. They fully understand that they're not up against a Downey Grab."

The lawyer accepted the invitation to eat with the company, and shortly afterward the actors arrived with fine appetites.

Sam had a fair house that afternoon, taking in about \$50.

He explained to Mr. Benton, who stayed to the show, that he had had double the number at his first six performances.

"I expect a larger audience to-night, and I hope to do well also to-morrow," he said.

"I'm glad that you appear to be making a success of your venture," said the lawyer. "If there's millions in it I trust you will get your share of the money."

After the show, Mr. Benton bade him goodby, told him

to write regularly so that he would know how he was getting on and then took his leave.

That night Sam had a good house, nearly every seat being taken.

The house programmes announced that the bill would be changed on the following day.

On the following morning the wagon with the band paraded the streets again, and Sam had a good attendance at both shows.

The young manager continued to do well as the boat progressed down the Illinois River.

He abandoned his idea of making side trips by rail to towns near the river as he would lose time in making arrangements with managers of opera houses and in advertising the show; besides it was better to stick to his marine theatre than to give up the customary percentage.

He made trips up some of the larger tributaries of the stream when he thought it would pay, and it generally did more or less.

At last the marine theatre, after a successful run of many weeks, entered the Mississippi just above the town of Grafton, which had a population of about 1,000, and was made fast to the principal dock.

CHAPTER XIV.

EARLY MORNING INTRUDERS.

By this time Sam had quite a bunch of money, and its safety was a source of uneasiness to him, as he had no place to put it except in a tin box he had bought at Dexter.

Several times he had been on the point of purchasing a small safe, but owing to the rush of business on his hands he had put it off.

He kept the tin box hidden in a locker of the deck cabin, and as the three women were in or around there most of the time, for they still continued to officiate as cooks, he had confidence enough in them to believe that it was perfectly safe.

As there wasn't a week so far that he hadn't added something to his profits, and some weeks it amounted to considerable, his pile had steadily grown larger, until now, as we said, it was quite large.

As the company, with the exception of Micky, slept in the hold well forward, he had no protection at night, when lying alongside a wharf, but the revolver he had bought and his general assistant, who was two years younger than himself.

They hauled into Grafton late on a Wednesday afternoon, and Micky immediately went ashore to purchase groceries, and the meat needed for the evening and morning meal.

The leading lady furnished him with a list of the stuff required, and Sam gave him a bill to pay for the goods.

The converted canal-boat attracted attention along the water front at Grafton, just as it had at every town they stopped at.

It was a novelty, and there largely lay the success he had achieved thus far.

The show advertised itself not a little because it occupied a floating playhouse, and the band inside the transparency did the rest, for Sam put out very little paper in com-

parison with the average show, chiefly because it hadn't time, as a rule, to do its work.

If they reached a town in the forenoon they played there that night, and sometimes started with a matinee at two.

Under such circumstances it was almost a waste of energy and printing to bill the place except superficially.

Sam noticed several suspiciously rough characters lounging about on the Grafton wharf when he went ashore to see about dockage fees and to attend to other matters connected with the show.

The man who owned the wharf was at his office, and Sam came to terms with him.

Standing outside the door he noticed a small safe, about two feet and a half high, and proportionately wide and deep, such as sell new for about \$50.

There was a "For Sale" sign on it, and the words "Inquire within."

"How much do you want for that safe outside?" he asked the man.

"Twenty dollars," was the reply.

"Is it in good condition?"

"First class. I'll let you look at it."

The man took him outside and opened the safe.

As far as Sam could see it appeared to be all right.

"I'll give you \$15 for it, delivered on board my boat," said Sam.

"I'll let you have it for that if you'll take it away yourself."

"No," said Sam, "I won't buy a safe unless it's delivered."

The man finally agreed to deliver the safe if Sam was willing to pay another dollar.

Sam said he wouldn't stand on a dollar if the man would have it put on board at once.

The owner consented; and the deal was made.

When Sam got back to the boat the safe was in the deck cabin.

The only available spot for it to stand was near the door, and there it had been left.

The first thing the boy manager did was to arrange a new combination of his own, and lock his money box and account books up in it.

For the first time in some weeks he felt easy about his funds.

"So yez have got a safe at last" said Micky. "Begorra yez naded it badly. It's meself has been afraid ye'd be claned out some fine night whin we were both aslape. Now yez kin fale asy in your mind about your money, for it would take more than a thafe or two to carry off that hefty bunch of stale."

"That's right. Only a burglar with the proper tools and experience with safes could get into it," said Sam.

"He couldn't do it without making a power of noise, and that would wake us up, and thin things wouldn't be healthy for him," said Micky.

"He'd be apt to fix us beforehand so we couldn't interfere."

"And while he was tryin' to fix wan of us what would the other be doin'?"

"It isn't likely he'd be alone. Those chaps always go in pairs when there's not more of them."

"Well, we've got a couple of bolts on the dure. That's

somethin'. I'll bet no chap could get through thim bolts widout wakin' me up."

At that moment the soubrette called them to supper, so their conversation came to an end for the time being.

While they were all at supper many curious people came down to the wharf to look at the floating theatre.

Micky had placed a billboard outside which announced that the stirring Western play, "The Girl of Golden Gulch," would be performed on the following evening, with a matinee at two, and a bunch of people gathered around it to study the information in the gathering darkness.

Then they looked at the boat, and many wondered how a real play could be performed on board of her.

"Say, mister, is that a floatin' opera house you have there?" a spectator asked Sam when he appeared at the gangway entrance.

"Yes, sir," replied the young manager.

"Then you have a stage, and scenery, just like they have at theatres?"

"We surely have. Step on board and you can see for yourself."

Sam told Micky to light a couple of lamps at the wings so the man could see that there was no fake about the stage.

As soon as Micky had done so Sam invited the rest of the crowd to take a look, too, for he knew they would tell all about what they had seen and that would prove an advertisement for the show.

The crowd was satisfied there was no flim-flam about the theatre and they made many inquiries about the play.

Sam puffed up the drama and the crowd went away to carry the news to their friends and acquaintances.

A few loungers remained and Sam noticed that two of them were particularly hard-looking characters.

He called Micky's attention to them and his assistant agreed that they would stand watching.

In the course of an hour, however, they went away, after the rest had departed, and the wharf remained silent and deserted.

"They're gone at last," said Sam; "but I wouldn't be surprised if they came back in the early hours of morning and ventured on board to see what they could pick up. They're actions were decidedly suspicious."

"Thin we'd better kape a watch. It won't do to let thim stale a march on us. They might try to run away wid some of the sates, if nothin' else."

"I ought to hire a regular watchman and take him along on the boat. It doesn't pay to take chances. Some evil-disposed person might come aboard and set fire to the stage and put me out of business for awhile."

"That's right. Yez niver kin tell what some people will do," said Micky.

So it was decided that they should stand a two-hour watch alternately until morning—something that Sam had not considered necessary before.

They cast lots to see who should take the first spell, and it fell to Micky, so Sam turned in for two hours.

Micky aroused him at one o'clock, and informed him that nothing had happened.

Sam, with his revolver in his pocket, took up his post near the entrance gangway, which was closed with a canvas curtain, secured at each side.

It offered no bar to an interloper resolved to get on board.

In fact there were lots of chances for a person to get on the boat in a clandestine way.

Sam's two-hour spell had almost elapsed without anything occurring, and he was beginning to think that the marine theatre would not be molested, when he saw two shadowy figures slouching toward the boat.

"By George! Here come two men now, and their errand can't be an honest one, for they have no right here at this hour," muttered the young manager.

He watched them through a narrow opening in the side of the canvas door.

They paused at the edge of the wharf and listened.

The gang-plank, with its protected sides, had been taken on board, but it was a simple matter for a fairly active person to step across the two feet of space which lay between the stringer of the wharf, pull the canvas door aside after cutting the cords that held it, and then spring on the deck of the craft.

That is exactly what the rascals decided on doing, as Sam, who was prepared for them, supposed they would do.

Confident that the coast was clear, one of the men stretched his left leg out, and gaining a foothold on the edge of the boat, put out his hand to see how the canvas was held in place.

As he bent forward, straddling the watery two feet, Sam shoved the muzzle of his navy revolver in his face, and said, in resolute tones, "Skip!"

Taken completely by surprise, the rascal started back, lost his hold and shot down between the boat and the wharf, like a demon vanishing through a stage trap in a spectacular play, hitting the water with a loud splash, and going under.

CHAPTER XV.

CONCLUSION.

His companion had not observed the cause which led to his discomfiture, and supposed his associate's foot had slipped and thus precipitated him into the river.

He uttered an exclamation of disgust and looked down into the water.

But Sam woke him up by firing his revolver so close to his head that he uttered a howl and fell back on the wharf, thinking he had been shot.

When he found that he had not been touched, he scrambled to his feet and beat a hasty retreat, leaving his pal to his fate.

That individual rose, blowing like a grampus, grabbed a convenient pile and hung on.

The water was too deep for him to touch bottom, and he could not swim.

He was afraid to climb up lest the person with the revolver should fire at him as he had done at his companion.

The report of the weapon had aroused Micky, and he came running out of the deck cabin with a club in his hand.

He immediately jumped at the conclusion that the shooting had happened on the boat, and he ran forward.

"Where are yez, Sam?" he cried out.

"Here I am, Micky," replied Sam, who had been watching the rascal in the water, drawing in his head. "Come here."

"Who did yez shoot at?" asked his assistant, coming up.

"A pair of rascals who tried to steal on board," answered Sam. "One has run away and the other is down in the water, clinging to a pile. Look at him."

Micky poked his head out and could just see the outline of the half-immersed man.

At that moment a night watchman in the neighborhood came running down the wharf.

Sam called to him and explained the circumstances.

Micky got a rope and threw it down to the rascal.

"Catch hold, ye thafe of the wurruld, and we'll pull yez up."

When Sam and Micky got him up to a level with the stringer, the watchman seized him by the collar and yanked him up the balance of the way.

Sam asked the watchman to take him to the station-house, promising to make a charge against the man in the morning.

In the course of the morning Sam appeared at the magistrate's court and made his complaint against the prisoner.

The man denied that he and his pal intended to board the vessel for an unlawful purpose, declaring that they were drunk and did not know what they were about.

The watchman testified that the fellow seemed to be perfectly sober, and Sam said the same thing.

As the fellow had really not got aboard the boat the magistrate sentenced him to thirty-five days in the county workhouse, and that ended the matter.

The company showed that afternoon and evening to two fair-sized houses considering the size of the town, and Sam carried away over \$100 above his expenses.

The boat then started up the Mississippi.

It is not our purpose to follow the marine theatre further, as our space will not permit.

We will simply say that Sam followed the route which Micky had, in general terms, outlined, and the novelty of the show made it a big financial success to the young manager.

Altogether they were out two years by the time they reached Pittsburgh, via. the long Ohio, and Sam had a big stack of yellow bills in his safe, enough to build a mighty fine new floating theatre, with its own motive power, electric lighting and up-to-date accommodations for his company, for he was resolved to continue the business that way and still leave a balance to run his show.

The new floating theatre, had a seating capacity of 500 seats and standing-room for 150 more.

With this outfit Sam and his enterprise retraced their way back over the Ohio to the Mississippi, and for years the young manager did a land office business, and from last accounts in the theatrical papers he was still running the show that had demonstrated there was "Millions in It."

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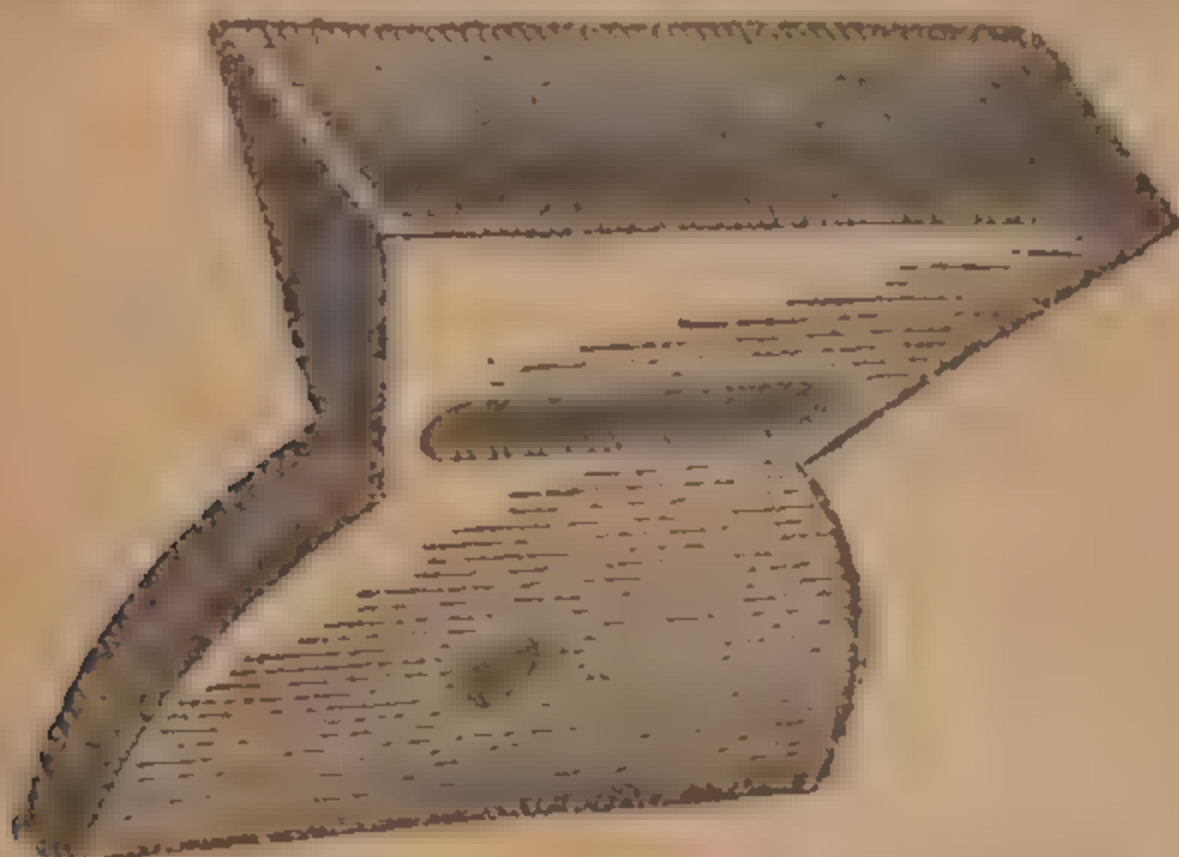
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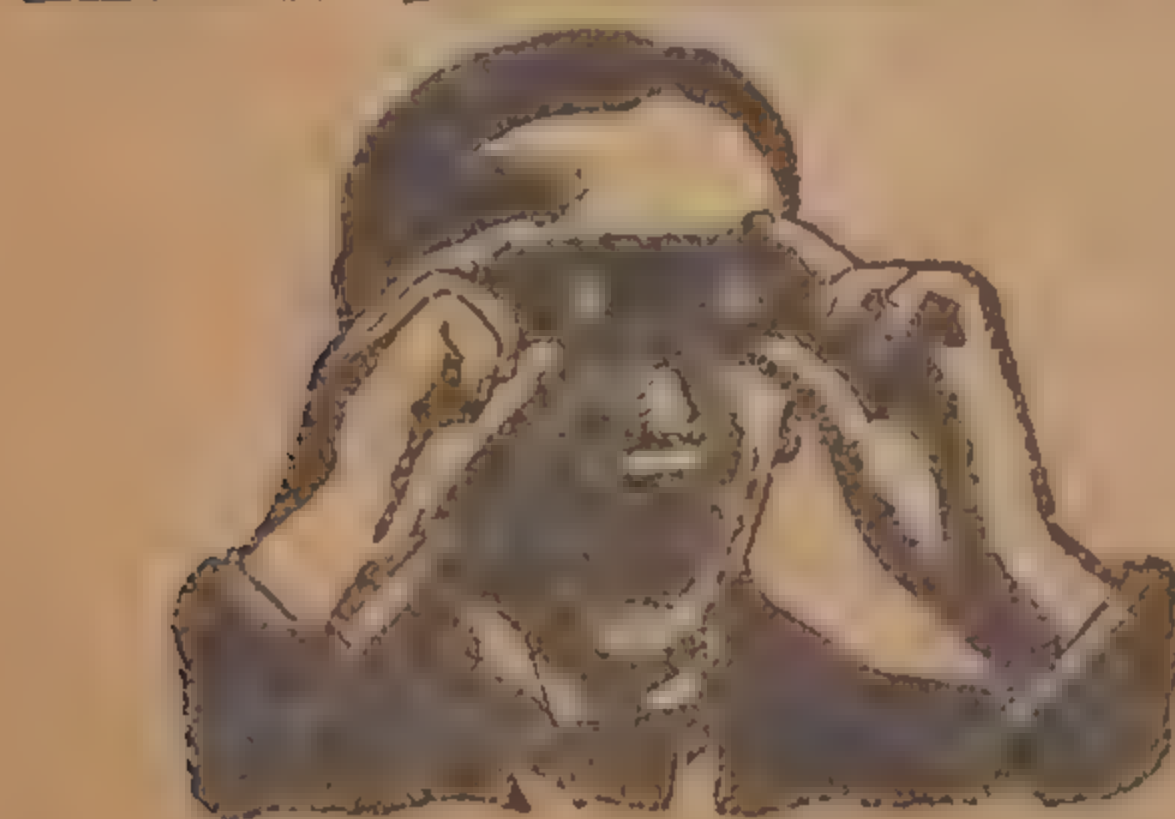


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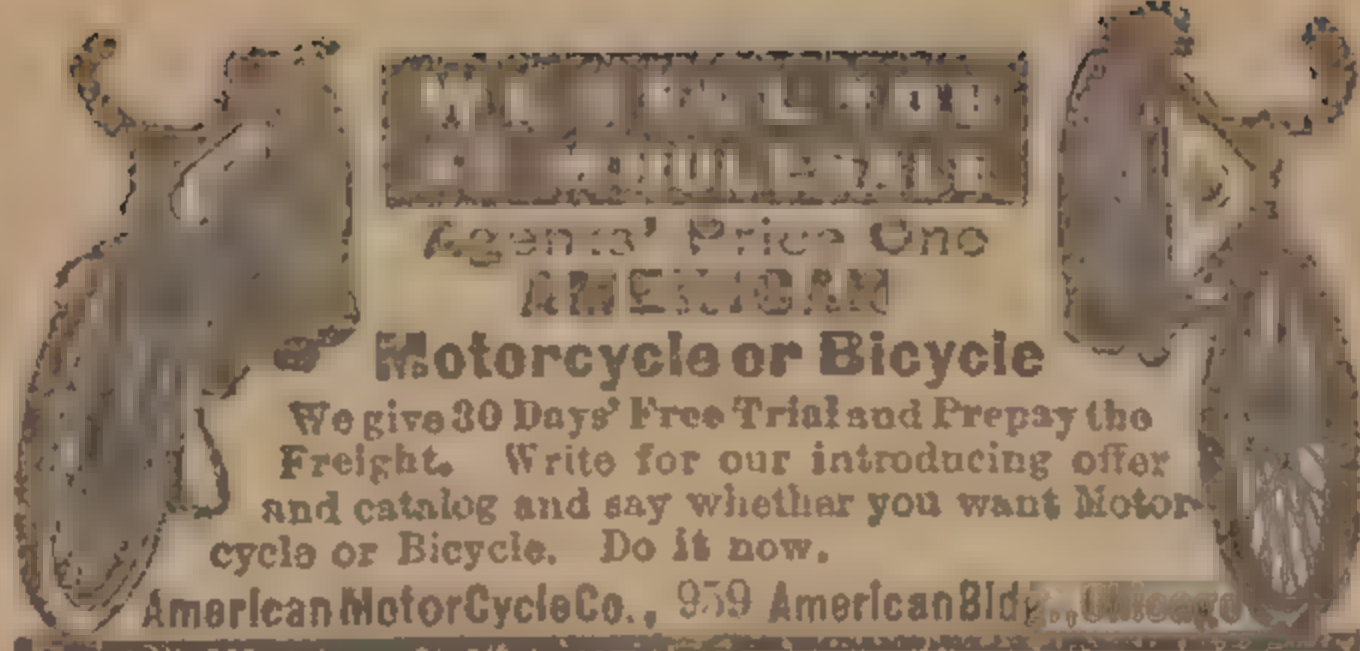
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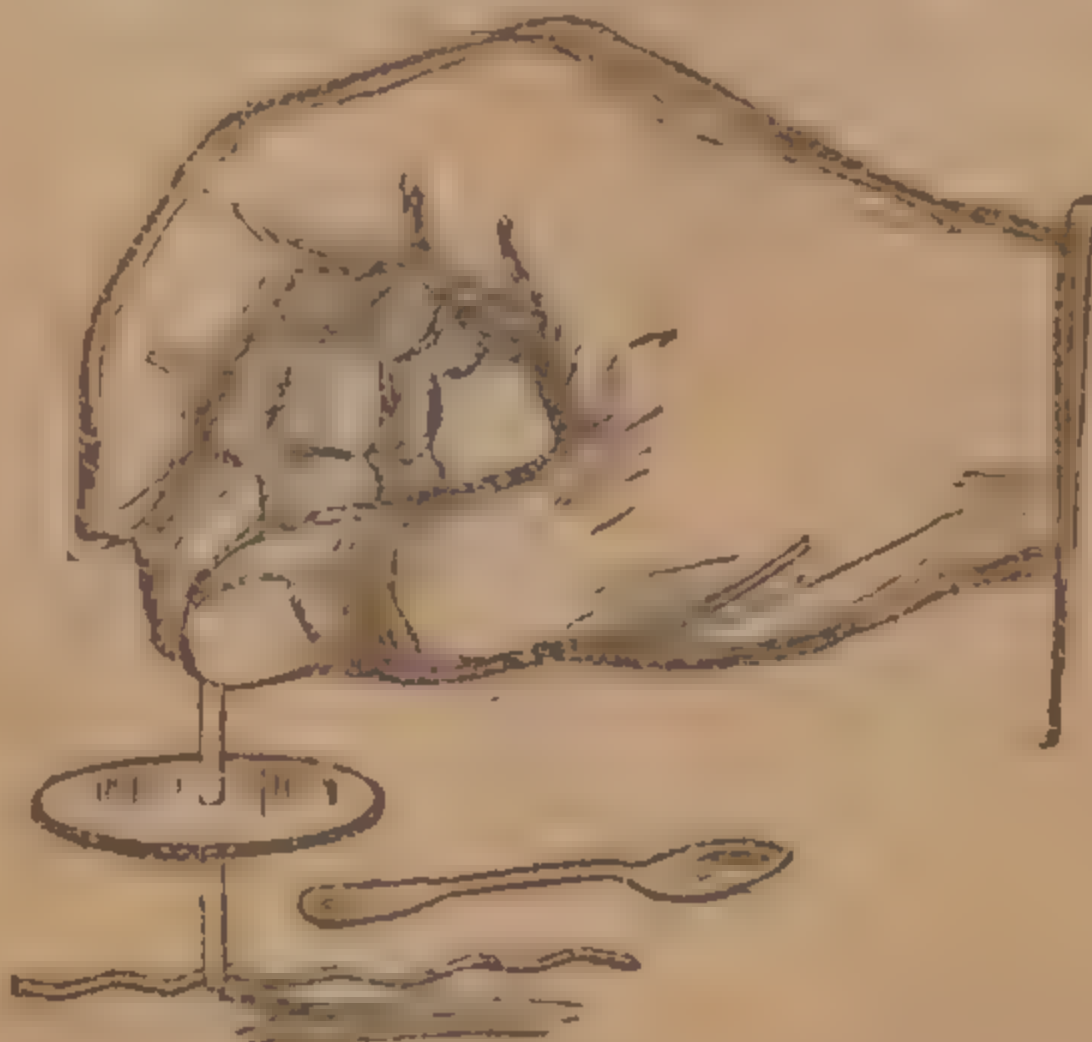


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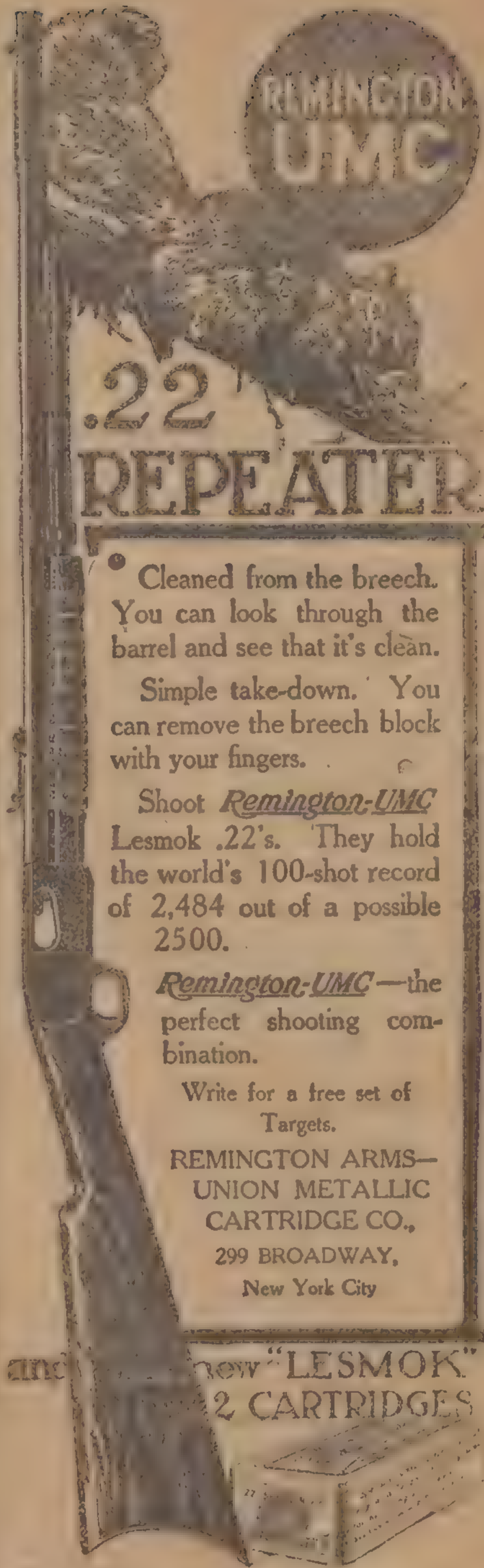
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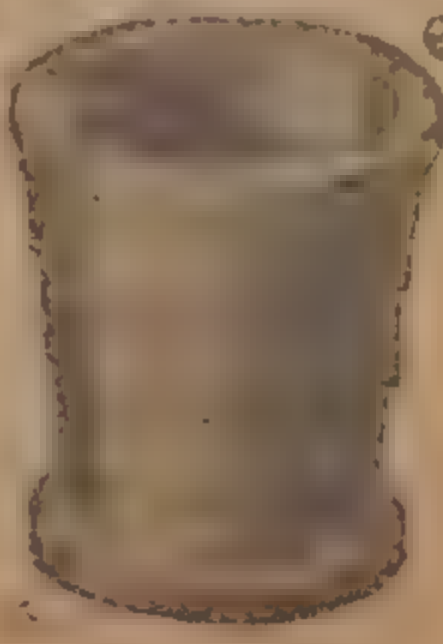
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GOOD STORIES.

The longest fence in the world is to be constructed between the United States and Mexico. It will extend from El Paso, Tex., to the Pacific coast, a distance of 1,100 miles. The purpose is to make the boundary between the United States and Mexico. The fence will be built of barbed wire.

Chicago is now the largest piano producing center in the world, turning out annually more than 100,000 instruments, which are shipped all over the world. Manila alone within the last two years has taken over 1,100 pianos. Mexico, until the present troubles overtook that republic, took more than 6,000 pianos annually from Chicago, and Central and South America, especially the Argentine Republic, have been great consumers of Chicago pianos. Up to a few years ago Germany sent all the instruments that were shipped to those countries. But the German woods in the cases would not stand the climates. It was Milwaukee that first discovered this and sent trade emissaries to the far away lands. Within a few years Chicago has built up a large export trade in this line. What holds good of the piano also holds good of band instruments. Chicago sells approximately 100,000 pianos a year, aggregating in value about \$50,000,000, which is about one-third of the entire product of the nation.

A scientist has constructed an ingenious model to show why a cat in falling invariably alights on its feet. This model, roughly speaking, consists of a cardboard cylinder wherein are stuck four rods to serve for legs, together with a tail devised on similar principles. The object of the experiment is to show that a feline's peculiar faculty depends on the rotation of its tail with sufficient vigor. This faculty is one specially developed by climbing and leaping animals, such as members of the cat tribe, monkeys, squirrels, rats, and most lemurs. As mentioned, the tail plays an important part in the turning process. According to the investigator all tree-inhabiting monkeys have long tails, and there is not the slightest doubt that these tails are of great aid to all climbers in enabling them to turn in the air. The tail also serves as a balancer, as evidenced in the case of a squirrel, which may be seen walking along a tightly stretched wire or string, swinging its tail from side to side much after the manner of a tight-rope walker balancing himself with a pole.

Another story of treasure comes from China. It is said that gold bars worth \$30,000,000 have been shipped from Peking to London, and that these bars represent a part of the fortune of the late Empress Dowager. No one seems to know who

shipped them or to whom they have been sent, but that the terrible old lady must have had vastly greater wealth than this is certain enough. During the occupation of Peking by the allied troops the treasure was concealed, and although some of it was found and looted the bulk of it was undisturbed. Tse Hsi was supposed to be the richest woman in the world. She had a positive genius for graft that would fill a politician with hopeless envy. The average yearly value of her birthday gifts—gifts are an expression of courtesy—was something like \$10,000,000, and she sat at the receipt of customs as unblushingly as a tax collector whenever special favors and appointments were to be bought and sold. On one occasion the Chinese government made a grant of \$15,000,000 for the expense of the navy, but the ingenious Tse Hsi got the whole of it. She built a new and gorgeous palace for herself, and to silence any possible critics she marked one of the gates with the words, "Admiralty Office."

JOKES AND JESTS.

"And so you have a little baby at your house. Is it a boy or a girl?" asked a neighbor. "Mamma thinks it's a boy, but I believe it'll turn out a girl. It's always crying about nothing," answered the little boy.

"Did you hear about Hawkins getting smothered in his morning's mail?" "Gracious, no! How did it happen?" "He advertised for the names of persons contemplating the purchase of a bicycle."

"This book on swimming is very useful in sudden emergencies," said Mr. Ireland. "Is it?" "I should say so. If you are drowning turn to page one hundred and three and you'll see how to save yourself."

Mrs. Elderly (taking politely-proffered seat in crowded car)—Thank you, my little man. Did your mother tell you to always give up your seat to ladies? Polite Boy—No'm, not all ladies—only old ladies.

"Excuse me, sir, but guests without luggage must pay in advance," said the hotel clerk. "All right. I'll be back in a moment," the guest answered. "Where are you going?" "I'm going to buy a trunk."

"I heah yo' engagement wif Sam Washin'ton's dun broke off." "Yaas; dat man got too fresh wif his jokin'. I dun ast him toe bring some cold cream for my complexshun, an' he sent me a box of chocolate cream."

A poor Irishman offered an old saucepan for sale. His children gathered around him and asked why he parted with it. "Ah, me honeys," he answered, "I would not be afther parting with it but for a little money to buy something to put in it."

"You are charged with carrying concealed weapons." "It's all a mistake, your Honor. You see, I had a pair of old pistols that I shoved into my pocket to illustrate a very clever pun I recently worked up. I get the boys to talking about balloons, and then I say my life was once saved by parachutes. When they give me the laugh I draw out the old pistols—pair-o-shoots, see? Ha, ha, ha!" "Did you invent that?" "Yes, your Honor. "Thirty days."

THE MATE'S REWARD

By Kit Clyde

The crimson light of the rising sun fell upon the sea as Mary Burlville, the captain's pretty daughter, came up from the cabin of the merchant ship "Cameron," becalmed off the coast of Peru.

The girl had just completed her morning toilet, and there was one youthful sailor aboard who fancied he had never seen a lovelier object than this young woman of seventeen.

The sailor alluded to was Thomas Rollins, a fine-looking, intelligent seaman of twenty, who now stood at the wheel.

For an instant Mary glanced towards him, and blushed as she bade him good-morning, then she had walked to the rail and fixed her gaze upon an old whale-ship which was in plain sight, not a league off the quarter.

Rollins had politely responded to her salutation, then a sad look had fallen on his manly face.

In brief, the young fellow loved the captain's daughter, but he could have entertained no hope of ever making her his wife, even had he known that his affection was returned.

The girl and he were born in the same village, where, for awhile, they had been playmates in childhood.

They were separated by the captain's moving to a distant seaport town.

A few years later the failure of his father in business had induced the boy to undertake a sea-voyage.

He continued to pursue the calling of a sailor, and finally meeting Captain Burlville, he had shipped aboard his vessel.

Burlville, however, had at once discouraged any renewal of the old friendship between his daughter and Rollins.

"I have nothing against you, of course," he said to the latter; "but as you and she are now man and woman, it is better that you should keep apart, as you would never be more to each other than mere acquaintances."

When he also gave his instructions to Mary on the same subject, she pouted and wept, for she had always liked Rollins as a little boy, and she had not failed to notice that he was now grown to be a sturdy, handsome young fellow, with frank, pleasant manners that pleased her.

"I think you very unreasonable, papa," she sobbed. "It is because he is a foremast hand that you object to him."

"An ounce of prevention is better than a pound of cure," said Burlville. "I would not have you fall in love and marry any one less than a mate, or a captain, who would be able to provide for you better than a poor foremast hand."

"Why not make Rollins a mate, then?" said Mary, looking up shyly through her tears.

"Well, well, he may become an officer in time, but he has his way to work up. True, he is very clever as it is, and as he has a knowledge of navigation, he would perhaps make a good mate."

"Why don't you promote him, if that is the case?"

"In the first place, because there is no vacancy here. Then, again, I don't believe in lifting a young fellow up to a position all at once. Let him gradually work his way to it, as I have done. The best I can do is to recommend him to some ship-owner."

"But you own this ship. You could make him a mate of yours."

She coaxed him and pleaded with him so earnestly, that at last he said he would think about it.

If Rollins should prove himself more prompt and true in

performing his duties than the other sailors, he, the captain, might take him for his mate in course of time.

Now, as the girl looked over the rail on this bright morning, she thought of her father's promise.

It was a pleasant thought in her, and her blooming cheeks were dimpled with smiles, while her dark eyes shone like stars.

All at once, between the craft aboard of which she stood and the whaler, she noticed a number of forked jets or spouts shooting up from the sea.

"There blows!" cried the father, who had just emerged from the cabin. "That whaler will soon have her boats down. Upon my word, I should like to go near those oil-hunters and see the sport."

Even as he spoke, four boats were dropped alongside of the stranger, and they were soon heading towards the spouts.

"I must see the fun," said the skipper, "and I shall go. Lower away the dingey," he said. "I want three good men to go with me."

He selected the three who were to go, among them Rollins, who had just been relieved at the wheel.

The boat was soon down, with the skipper at the tiller and the oarsmen in their places.

"Give way!" cried the captain.

The boat made good progress towards the whales, which were now slowly heading seaward.

The sailors from the other ship were pulling with might and main after the huge fish, whose dark humps were occasionally lifted above the surface, as they moved along on their way.

At last one of the sharp-pointed boats of the whaler was within darting distance of a great monster, which had lagged a little behind the rest of the school.

A tall, dark man, in a guernsey and blue trousers, rose in the bow of his boat, harpoon in hand.

For an instant the weapon was poised, to be hurled the next moment with unerring aim.

It was buried to the socket in the whale, whose flukes were seen whisking to and fro through the white sheets of spray that hid the boat.

"They are fast," remarked Captain Burlville, who with his men—the latter now resting on their oars, about sixty fathoms from their ship—was an interesting spectator of the scene.

From her father's craft Mary had also seen the man strike the whale.

"Poor fish," she said, with a shudder, as she placed both little hands over her eyes.

All at once she heard wild shouts.

Looking in the direction of the noise, she perceived that the fast boat, dragged by the whale, which had sounded (gone down), was heading straight toward the dingey in which were her parent and three oarsmen.

The whale-boat, its crew cheering and yelling like madmen, seemed to cleave the water with the swiftness of an arrow, and it was soon not more than forty fathoms from the skipper and his companions.

"Oh, papa, you will be run into!" screamed Mary, in alarm.

The captain looked toward her, shook his head, and in a minute he had the dingey pulled out of the track of the coming boat.

Scarcely was this done, however, when there was a cry of terror from the young girl, who now beheld the water parted by the huge body of the whale as the monster shot up, with the iron protruding from its hump, and the line attached to his weapon whisking in many blights and coils around it.

The creature was close to the dingey, beating the sea with his flukes and churning the foam with his paw.

"Pull ahead!" shouted Burlville, aware of his danger.

He directed the small craft away from the whale, his three oarsmen pulling vigorously.

But before he was six fathoms from the animal the latter suddenly made straight for the little boat, his jaws wide open, his sharp, saw-like fangs viciously revealed.

"Take care there!" came warningly from the whalemén, still more than a hundred yards distant.

Burlville did his best to escape his infuriated pursuer, but the leviathan gained rapidly upon him, and now, to avoid the great jaw, which was about to close upon the fragile stern of the light vessel, he sheered to one side.

In an instant the enormous flukes, almost alongside of which this movement of the skipper had brought him, were raised high in the air and whirled directly over the dingey, upon which it appeared they were about to descend with a force which would have crushed the light planks to fragments.

Seeing these fearful weapons of the mighty fish fanning the air above their heads, two of the oarsmen at once sprang into the sea, leaving Rollins and the captain still in the boat.

"My father—oh, poor papa!" cried Mary, who now, very pale, leaned far over the rail of the ship, her hands clasped, her gaze riveted upon her parent.

The latter was in a peculiarly perilous situation.

A bight of the line whisking from the whale had caught about his waist, and having no knife with him, he was unable to clear himself of the rope, which had tightened about his body, holding him down between two thwarts, as the flukes with a crash struck the sea, just missing the dingey.

Rollins, who had been inclined to follow the example of his two shipmates when they jumped overboard, had controlled himself when he perceived the situation of his captain.

With a quick movement of his oar he had caused the boat to shoot ahead, thus barely getting it out of reach of those ponderous flukes as they descended.

Now he quickly drew the sheath-knife he wore in his belt, and springing to the skipper's side, he with one blow severed the line that had caught about the waist of the imperiled man, and which by this time pulled him half way over the gunnel.

There was a roaring, gurgling sound, a hissing mass of foam and spray, then a crunching, snapping noise, as the boat was crushed in the jaw of the whale.

Rollins and the captain rolled over into the sea on that side of the dingey opposite to the deadly fangs.

For several moments they were hidden in the sheets of flying spray from the gaze of Mary Burlville, who had witnessed with joy and pride the gallant conduct of the young man whom she had already secretly loved.

Again she feared that after all they might be lost—be killed by the monster whose flukes were still beating the ocean.

Soon these fears were at rest.

The great fish went down, under the foaming waters, and there were her father and Rollins, now striking out for the whaler's boat, which was close at hand.

The swimmers were picked up a minute later, to find the two who had previously jumped from the dingey already taken in.

Burlville did not reprimand them, for he knew that, had he not been caught by the line, which at the time held him fast to the boat, he too would have sprung overboard.

He was, of course, very earnest in his praise of Rollins for rescuing him from a terrible fate.

Had not the young man so bravely remained in the boat and cut the rope by which the captain was caught, that person, even had he escaped the whale's jaws, must have been dragged down with the monster when it dived.

So grateful was the skipper that when he arrived aboard and had embraced his daughter, he told his preserver that he might in the future take up his quarters in the cabin, where he would employ him as his clerk, and that Mary and he might hereafter be as friendly with each other as they pleased.

When at last the ship arrived home, the captain said to his daughter—

"I promised you I would promote Rollins. Well, I suppose you would like to have me make him my first mate?"

"Yes, papa," said Mary, blushing, as she laid her soft cheek against his arm, "and—and—as he has proposed it, I would like to have him for my mate too."

As the captain had lately concluded not to object to any such proposition, he readily gave his consent.

RAINBOW LAND.

The West Highlands of Scotland may be called the home of the rainbow, for here you will see them at any time of the year, and in no other part of the world can they be seen in more perfect form and hue.

On a wild autumn day, with the west or southwest wind blowing the clouds up across the sun, I have seen one rainbow follow another in quick succession. A perfect arch of palpitating color becomes suddenly visible and frames the blue-black mountains, which sit hunched at the top of the loch, gathering the storms round their great shoulders and hurling them down onto the foam-white waters; at other times the bow shimmers across the sullen sky with both its ends resting on the water, a veritable gateway into fairyland.

Even when the rainbows are not visible in this part of the world it seems as if they had spilled their colors on the woods and hills. When the clouds lift and the belated sun shines over mountain and loch the effect is almost as dazzling as the rainbow itself.

In heather time the hills are wine-colored on their lower slopes, while their tops are a deep indigo-blue, standing out in strong contrast to the clear pale sky. Nearer at hand there is every shade of color from warm amethyst to the soft bloom of a purple plum.

Later in the year the hills are checkered with the pale gold of ripe grain, the red brown of withered heather, the rusty glow of bracken, and the still, vivid green of pasture fields, while the trees show every imaginable shade of hot color and seem to vie with each other in their efforts to defy the approaching gloom of winter.

The waters of the sea lochs, which add so much to the beauty of rainbow land, are tinted with all the shades of blue, gray and green, and at sunset glow with colors which rival the hues of the rainbow. The leaves fall and spread their brightness on the ground remorsefully; the passionate autumn rains awaken the burns, which slept during the summer, and the air is filled with the hoarse cry of many waters.

The dwellers in this rainbow land fall into the habit of looking up to see if the arch color is visible, and even if it is not there the attitude of hope cannot fail to uplift, and the consciousness that the rainbow is not far off never quite leaves them.



MYSTERIOUS PLATE LIFTER.—Made of fine rubber, top with bulb on one end and inflator at other. Place it under a table cover, under plate or glass, and bulb is pressed underneath, object rises mysteriously; 40 ins. long. Price, 25c., postpaid.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.



JUMPING CARD.—A pretty little trick, easy to perform. Effect: A selected card returned to the deck jumps high into the air at the performer's command. Pack is held in one hand. Price of apparatus, with enough cards to perform the trick, 10c.

M. O'NEILL, 425 W. 56th St., N. Y.



DEVILINE'S WHISTLE.—Nickel plated, polished; it produces a near-piercing sound; large seller; illustration actual size.

Price, 12c., by mail. WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.



MICROSCOPE.—By use of this wonderful little microscope you can magnify a drop of stagnant water until you see thousands of crawling insects; is also useful for inspecting grain, pork, linen and numerous other articles. This little instrument does equally as good work as the best microscopes and is invaluable to the household. Is made of best finished brass; size when closed one inch by two and a half inches. Price, 30c.

L. SENARENS, 347 Winthrop St., Brooklyn, N. Y.

MANY TOOL KEY RING.



The wonder of the age. The greatest small tool in the world. In this little instrument you have in combination seven useful tools embracing Key Ring, Pencil Sharpener, Nail Cutter and Cleaner, Watch Opener, Cigar Clipper, Letter Opener and Screw Driver. It is not a toy, but a useful article, made of cutlery steel, tempered and highly nickelled. Therefore will carry an edge the same as any piece of cutlery. As a useful tool, nothing has ever been offered to the public to equal it.

Price, 15 cents, mailed, postpaid.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

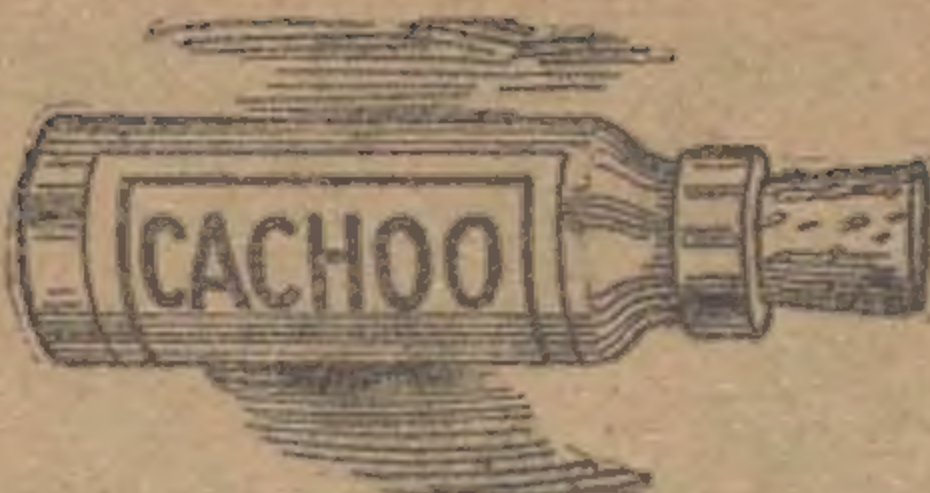


HAPPY HOOLIGAN JOKER.

With this joker in the lappel of your coat, you can make a dead shot every time. Complete, with rubber ball and tubing.

Price, 15 cents, by mail, postpaid.

Chas. Unger, 316 Union St., Jersey City, N. J.



CACHOO OR SNEEZING POWDER.—The greatest fun-maker of them all. A small amount of this powder, when blown in a room, will cause everyone to sneeze without anyone knowing where it comes from. It is very light, will float in the air for some time, and penetrate every nook and corner of a room. It is perfectly harmless. Cachoo is put up in bottles, and one bottle contains enough to be used from 10 to 15 times.

Price by mail, 10c. each; 3 for 25c.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

ROUGH AND READY TUMBLERS.



These lively acrobats are handsomely decorated with the U. S. flag and with gold and silver stars and hearts. Upon placing them upon any flat surface they at once begin a most wonderful performance, climbing and tumbling over each other and chasing each other in every direction, as if the evil spirit was after them, causing roars of laughter from the spectators. They actually appear imbued with life. What causes them to cut up such antics is a secret that may not be known even to the owner of the unruly subjects. If you want some genuine fun send for a set of our tumblers.

Price, per set, 10 cents; mailed postpaid.

A. A. WARFORD, 16 Hart St., Brooklyn, N. Y.

THE GERMAN OCARINO.



A handsome metal instrument, made in Germany, from which peculiar but sweet music can be produced.

Its odd shape, which resembles a torpedo boat, will attract much attention. We send instructions with each instrument, by the aid of which any one can in a short time play any tune and produce very sweet music on this odd looking instrument.

Price 10 cents by mail postpaid.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.



DELUSION TRICK.—A magic little box in three parts that is very mystifying to those not in the trick. A coin placed on a piece of paper disappears by dropping a nickel ring around it from the magic box. Made of hard wood two inches in diameter. Price, 12c.

M. O'NEILL, 425 W. 56th St., N. Y.

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The biggest sell of the season. A real cigar made of tobacco, but secreted in center of cigar about one-half inch from end is a fountain of sparks. The moment the fire reaches this fountain hundreds of sparks of fire burst forth in every direction, to the astonishment of the smoker. The fire is stage fire, and will not burn the skin or clothing. After the fireworks the victim can continue smoking the cigar to the end.

Price, 10 cents; 3 for 25 cents; 1 dozen, 90 cents, mailed, postpaid.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.



JAPANESE TRICK KNIFE.—You can show the knife and instantly draw it across your finger, apparently cutting deep into the flesh. The red blood appears on the blade of the knife, giving a startling effect to the spectators. The knife is removed and the finger is found in good condition. Quite an effective illusion. Price by mail, 10c. each.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

Good Luck Banks

Price 10 Cents



Ornamental as well as useful. Made of highly nickelled brass. It holds just One Dollar. When filled it opens itself. Remains locked until refilled. Can be used as a watchcharm. Money refunded if not satisfied.

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ELECTRIC PUSH BUTTON.—The base is made of maple, and the center piece of black walnut, the whole thing about 1 1/4 inches in diameter, with a metal hook on the back so that it may be slipped over edge of the vest pocket. Expose to view your New Electric Bell, when your friend will push the button expecting to hear it ring. As soon as he touches it, you will see some of the liveliest dancing you ever witnessed. The Electric Button is heavily charged and will give a smart shock when the button is pushed. Price 10c., by mail, postpaid.

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THE GREAT FIRE EATER.



A great Sensational Trick of the Day! With the Fire Eater in his possession any person can become a perfect salamander, apparently breathing fire and ejecting thousands of brilliant sparks from his mouth, to the horror and consternation of all beholders. Harmless fun for all times, seasons and places. If you wish to produce a decided sensation in your neighborhood

don't fail to procure one. We send the Fire Eater with all the materials, in a handsome box, the cover of which is highly ornamented with illustrations in various colors. Price of all complete only 15 cents, or 4 boxes for 50 cents, mailed postpaid; one dozen by express \$1.20.

N. B.—Full printed instructions for performing the trick accompany each box, which also contains sufficient material for giving several exhibitions.

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THE SURPRISE BOUQUET.

The best practical joke of the season. This beautiful button-hole bouquet is made of artificial flowers and leaves which so closely resemble natural flowers that not one person in a thousand would detect the difference. After placing the bouquet



in your button-hole you call the attention of a friend to its beauty and fragrance. He will very naturally step forward and smell of it, when, to his utter astonishment, a fine stream of water will be thrown into his face. Where the water comes from is a mystery, as you can have your hands at your side or behind you, and not touch the bouquet in any manner. You can give one dozen or more persons a shower bath without removing the bouquet from your button-hole, and after the water is exhausted it can be immediately refilled without removing it from your coat. Cologne can be used in place of water when desired. We have many funny things in our stock, but nothing that excels this.

Price, complete in a beautiful box, with full printed instructions, 25 cents, or three for 60 cents; by mail post paid.

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THE MAGIC DAGGER.



A wonderful illusion. To all appearance it is an ordinary dagger which you can flourish around in your hand and suddenly state that you think you have lived long enough and had better commit suicide at the same time plunging the dagger up to the hilt into your breast or side, or you can pretend to stab a friend or acquaintance. Of course your friend or yourself are not injured in the least, but the deception is perfect and will startle all who see it.

Price, 10 cents, or 3 for 25 cents, by mail, postpaid.

Cons. Unger, 316 Union St., Jersey City, N. J.



TRICK PUZZLE

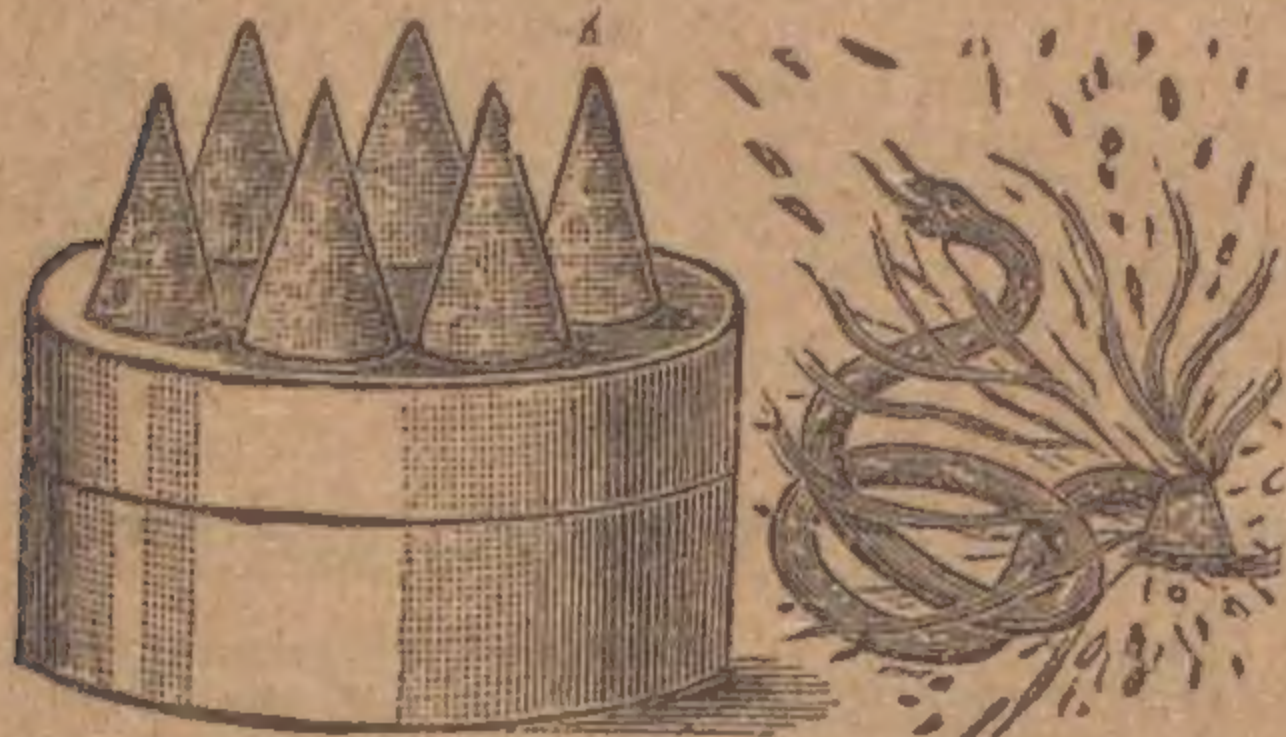
PURSE.—The first attempt usually made to open it, is to press down the little knob in the centre of purse, when a small needle runs out and stabs them in the finger, but does not open it. You can open it before their eyes and still

they will be unable to open it. Price by mail, postpaid, 25c. each.

FRANK ROBINSON, 311 W. 44th St., N. Y.

SNAKES IN THE GRASS.

Something entirely new, consisting of six large cones, each one nearly one inch in height. Upon lighting one of these cones with a match, you see



something similar to a 4th of July exhibition of fireworks. Sparks fly in every direction, and as the cone burns down it throws out and is surrounded with what appears to be grass; at the same time a large snake uncoils himself from the burning cone, and lazily stretches out in the grass, which at last burns to ashes, but the snake remains as a curiosity unharmed. They are not at all dangerous, and can be set off in the parlor if placed on some metal surface that will not burn. An ordinary dust pan answers the purpose nicely.

Price of the six cones, packed in sawdust, in a strong wooden box, only 10 cents, 3 boxes for 25 cents 1 dozen boxes 75 cents, sent by mail post paid.

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COMICAL RUBBER STAMPS.



A complete set of five grotesque little people made of indestructible rubber mounted on black walnut blocks. The figures consist of Policeman, Chinaman, and other laughable figures as shown in pictures. As each

figure is mounted on a separate block, any boy can set up a regular parade or circus by printing the figures in different positions. With each set of figures we send a bottle of colored ink, an ink pad and full instructions. Children can stamp these pictures on their toys, picture books, writing paper and envelopes, and they are without doubt the most amusing and entertaining novelty gotten up in years. Price of the complete set of Rubber Stamps with ink and ink pad, only 10 cents, 3 sets for 25 cents, one dozen 90 cents, by mail post-paid.

L. Senarens, 347 Winthrop St., Brooklyn, N. Y.

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PATENTED

Just out, and one of the most fascinating puzzles on the market. The stunt is to separate the antlers and rejoin them. It looks easy, but try it and you will admit that it is without exception the best puzzle you have ever seen. You can't leave it alone. Made of silvered metal.

Price, 12 cents; 3 for 30 cents, sent by mail, postpaid.

FRANK ROBINSON, 311 W. 44th St., N. Y.

Ayvad's Water-Wings



Learn to swim by one trial

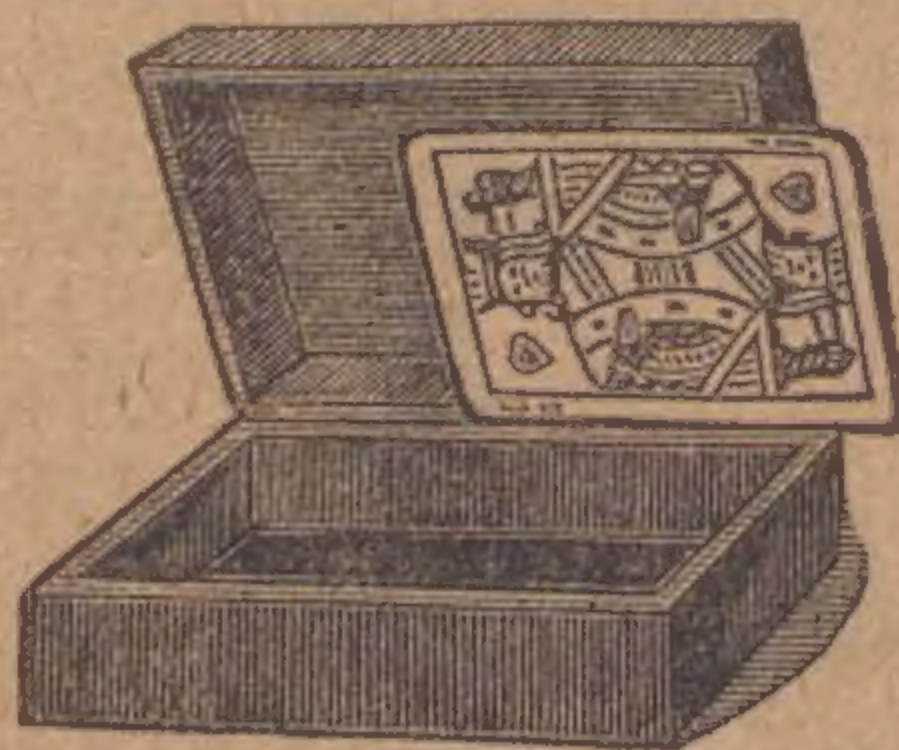
Price 25 cents, Postpaid

These water-wings take up no more room than a pocket-hankerchief. They weigh 3 ounces and support from 50 to 250 pounds. With a pair anyone can learn to swim or float. For use, you have only to wet them, blow them up, and press together the two ring-marks under the mouthpiece.

FRANK ROBINSON, 311 W. 44th St., N. Y.

THE MAGIC CARD BOX.

One of the best and cheapest tricks for giving parlor or stage exhibitions. The trick is performed



as follows: You request any two persons in your audience to each select a card from an ordinary pack of cards, you then produce a small handsome box made to imitate pebbled leather, which anyone may examine as closely as they will. You now ask one of the two who have selected cards to place his or her card inside the box, which being done, the lid is shut, and the box placed on the table. You then state that you will cause the cards to disappear and upon opening the box the card has vanished and the box found empty. The other card is now placed in the box; the lid is again closed and when the box is opened the first card appears as strangely as it went. Other tricks can be performed in various ways. You may cause several cards to disappear after they are placed in the box, and then you can cause them all to appear at once. You may tear a card up, place it in the box, and on lifting the cover it will be found whole and entire. In fact, nearly every trick of appearance and disappearance can be done with the Magic Card Box.

Full printed instructions by which anyone can perform the different tricks sent with each box.

Price 20 cents, by mail postpaid.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.



IMITATION CUT FINGER—A cardboard finger, carefully bandaged with linen, and the side and end are blood stained. When you slip it on your finger and show it to your friends, just give a groan or two, nurse it up, and pull a look of pain. You will get nothing but sympathy until you give them the laugh. Then duck! Price 10c., postpaid.

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